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DISCRETIONS &
INDISCRETIONS



MYSELF AS I AM TO-DAY, MARCH, 1932, LUCY DUFF GORDON

DISCRETIONS & INDISCRETIONS

By
LADY DUFF GORDON

THIRD IMPRESSION

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DISCRETIONS AND INDISCRETIONS

CHAPTER ONE

“**N**OTHING but the white heat of passion can forge the spark of genius.”

A man, who loved me very much, once said this to me when I had told him the story of my birth, and I have never forgotten it, for I should like to think that it is true. It certainly was in one respect, for no two people were ever more passionately in love than my father and mother were when I was born, a demure little daughter, with an incurably sunny disposition from my cradle. Of the “genius” I cannot speak. I have been successful in many things and a failure in others. I have made a great fortune and lost it all. I have loved many people and been loved by many more. Been happy for moments in my life and known my full share of sorrow in others. Yet, if genius is the faculty of creating and seeing beauty in every-day life, then indeed my friend spoke truly and I possess it.

I do not think that, on the whole, it is good for a woman to have temperament. It is much better for her to be a vegetable, and certainly much safer, but I never had the choice. I have often secretly envied my normal and conventionally feminine friends, contented with their stolid husbands and commonplace children, for I have known that such contentment could never be mine. I have always had too much imagination

and splashed the blank canvas of my life with such brilliant colours that there had to be a good bas-relief of black to make them stand out. A woman's imagination is such a delicate and vivid thing that everyday life cannot keep pace with it, and realities, no matter how attractive they may have seemed from afar, will always disappoint her. At least that has been my own experience.

As other women have found satisfaction in physical creation, in bearing and bringing up children, so I have found mine in creating a dream world of my own, and I used to step into it and shut the door behind me whenever the everyday facts of life appeared too dull and uninteresting.

If I were asked now what I consider to be the greatest asset that any human being can bring into life I should reply, "a zest for living", and this was bequeathed to me by my parents, as it was to my sister, Elinor Glyn, their only other child, together with a great love of beauty. It was a fitting heritage of their romance.

I never knew my father, for he died when I was a baby of two years old, but I have heard my mother describe him so often that I can see him now as she saw him that first time, walking up the garden path of her father's old farmhouse, in the sunshine of a spring morning, tall and handsome and debonair, very sure of himself, and sure of life in general. Very sure, too, that he wanted her from the first moment he saw her, this lovely, little Canadian girl, still in her teens, with the bloom of youth in her soft colouring, and the shyness of the child hidden under her air of assurance, as she played hostess for her father, and poured out the tea from the huge urn and handed round cakes of her own baking.

It was a Sunday afternoon, and they were keeping open house, in the hospitable fashion of the Colonies

in those days at Woodlands, my grandfather's big ranch, just outside Guelph, Ontario, and my mother loves to tell of the number of suitors from miles around who used to ride over every week. But my father never had much to fear from them, for it was a case of love at first sight. Within a week he had proposed and been accepted.

In those few days they had a lot to learn about one another. She found out that her admirer was Douglas Sutherland, a distant relative of the Duke of Sutherland, and one of the pioneer group of young Englishmen of good birth who, not content with the small allowance which was all that an impoverished family could make them, had emigrated to the Colonies to earn a living for themselves. He was succeeding well enough at this, for although at that time he was still in his early twenties he was becoming well-known as an engineer, and there are important bridges in various parts of the world which testify to his ability.

But he was more than a builder of bridges. He was a painter and a musician of exceptional gifts. I still play one of the pieces which he composed for the piano, which was found by my mother in MS. after his death. He used to sit for hours playing to her, improvising lovely melodies, some of which he set to words. At other times he would shut himself up in his studio and paint. My mother has kept many of his pictures among her most cherished possessions, and she always says that my sister got her literary talent, and I my love of line and colour, from him.

As for mother, she was the practical one of the family, for she had a shrewd brain and a lot of commonsense locked away in her adorably pretty head. I have seen many of the most beautiful women in the world, but I never remember any with more charm than my own mother when she was young. She was gay and full of life, and from the Irish side of her

family she had inherited a great sense of humour and a ready wit.

So these two people embarked on marriage as a joyous adventure, and although neither of them had much money and very few definite plans for the future, they started off to Rio de Janeiro, where my father had been offered a contract. He spent some time there on construction work, and in the glamour and wonder of the first love of these young, vital beings, I was conceived. The torch they handed down to me was lighted at the flame of passion, and the rapture and the joy of their romance was rekindled in my own eagerness for emotional experience.

This, I think, is the only way in which children should be brought into life; there are too many mediocre, colourless men and women going about the world to-day, born of a union which was neither that of passion, nor of great love and companionship. There is very little to be said in my opinion for the "mariage de convenance", though I am aware that this view is not shared by everyone.

A few weeks before I was born my parents came to London, and I made my appearance in a house in St. John's Wood, a stone's throw from Lords. There was a big match in progress that day, and mother has told me that the last thing she remembered before losing consciousness was a tumultuous burst of cheering from the cricket ground. It struck her as a good omen afterwards for the little daughter whose arrival was thus heralded.

I was christened "Lucy Christiana". The first name I have always disliked intensely, although it was destined to become famous, and all my intimate friends have known me as Christiana. One year and four months later a little sister was born and christened Elinor after my mother. She was a very beautiful baby. I do not suppose that in all England a happier

family could have been found, for my father and mother adored one another, and were absurdly proud of their babies, and played with us both like dolls. Fortune seemed determined to smile on us, and contracts for several years ahead had been signed by my father. An invention of his, a special machine for piercing railway tunnels, had brought him to the fore, and he was at Turin engaged on the plans of a big viaduct when the blow fell. He caught typhus fever and came home to England a dying man.

Elinor, the baby, was just five months old on the day that he was buried.

My mother was distraught with grief, and for weeks it was feared that she would never survive the shock. She seemed to have lost all interest in life, and the little home that had known so much gaiety became a place of sorrow. One of my first vague, childish memories is of seeing my mother, in her widow's weeds, crying bitterly as she sorted out some papers that had belonged to my father. It made a deep impression on me, and I can recall to this day the consternation which came over me.

Hitherto I had associated crying with myself and Elinor, something that was the result of falling or having a pain, in any case something that could be quickly cured by a grown-up person. That one of these superior, god-like and all-powerful beings should themselves cry bitter, unchecked tears in my presence knocked the bottom out of my small world for the time being, and although I howled loudly in sympathy I had an obscure feeling that I had been let down.

In addition to the sorrow of losing the man she adored, my mother was faced with the worry of making the tiny sum of money which he had left provide for herself and two sturdy babies, whose demands became daily more complicated. In the end she gave up the unequal struggle and took us both out to Canada to

live with her parents, Grandfather and Grandmother Saunders.

By this time my grandparents had sold "Woodlands" and had taken another big ranch, "Summer Hill", and here most of my early childhood was spent.

As I write the picture of the two stern old people comes before me, and I can feel again the tremendous awe which grandmama invariably inspired in Elinor and myself. She was a very terrifying old lady, in her stiff, black, silk dresses and snowy, lace caps with their pink, velvet ribbons, and her severe rules of etiquette, which must never be infringed. Our infant lives were governed by a series of maxims. We must never cry, never do this or that.

"Ladies do not show emotion or cry. The common people can find that a relaxation," she would say.

Her whole attitude towards life was summed up in the phrase, "Noblesse oblige", which she so often quoted.

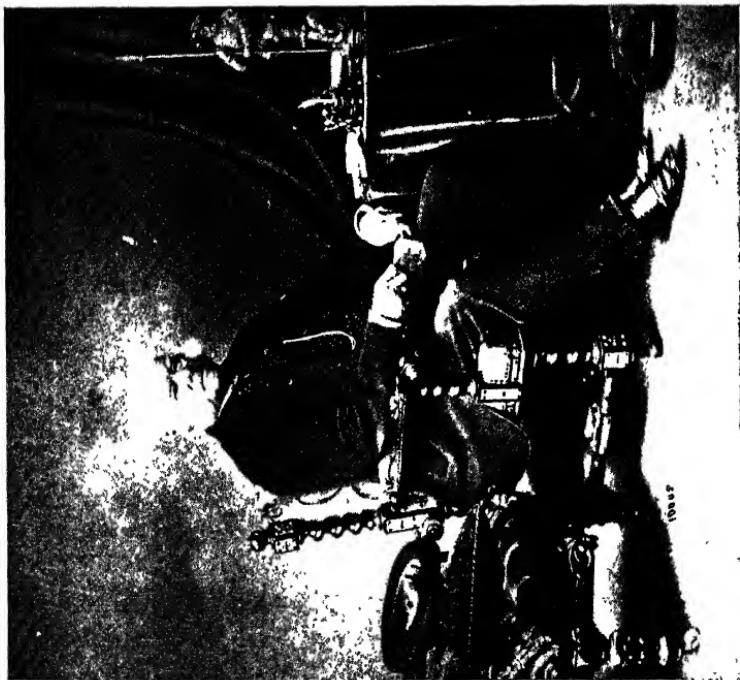
On the rare occasions when she unbent sufficiently to tell us tales we would listen fascinated by the adventures she had had.

She was the daughter of Sir John Wilcocks, of Dublin, and had been born in 1803. She remembered the Battle of Waterloo quite well as one of her elder brothers had fought in it, and the story of his being wounded and taken prisoner on the field was one of our favourites. She had been brought up principally in Paris, and although she had come out to the New World when she married my grandfather, she always longed to go back to France.

She and grandfather had come out to Canada, a six weeks' journey in those days, with three or four old Irish and Scottish families, and took up a large tract of land in a new country, which they farmed themselves, although neither of them had had any experience of work before. Grandmama used to say that her



MRS. SAUNDERS
the grandmother I was so much in awe of



MR. SAUNDERS
the grandfather who was always sympathetic

greatest grief was when her last pair of silk stockings went in holes !

She was faithful to the traditions of her French upbringing to the day of her death, for although she and grandfather had been doing the work of farm labourers all day, she insisted on dressing for dinner every night, and was always served with all the ceremony of a dinner party in Paris, rather than that of a ranch in the wilds.

Every year her French friends used to send out a huge barrel of clothes for the exiles—corsets, silk stockings, the latest Paris dresses, even expensive gloves and wigs. What use they could have been put to out there I cannot imagine, but they were an enormous consolation to grandmama.

So the early years of my life passed pleasantly enough on the ranch near Guelph, and I grew into a typical little Canadian girl, independent and resourceful, a terrible tomboy, used to playing with boys and quite capable of holding my own with them. I was the ringleader in all the games we played out in the fields, or in the dim, roomy old barns and storehouses ; I was always the one who was caught stealing apples, or falling into the duck pond, or chasing the hens.

I had absolutely no fear of anything on earth, and mother used to be terrified that I would break my neck or cripple myself for life in one of my escapades. I rode everything on the ranch that was within the limits of human possibility to ride, and learnt, after repeated tumbles, to stick firm on the back of a bucking steer. My thick mop of hair was always cropped short, and as I inevitably ruined every frock I possessed I was generally dressed in coarse blue serge in winter and striped gingham in summer. I could climb trees that very few of the boys in the neighbourhood could climb, and I was an expert at fishing for minnows with a bent pin.

My love for dolls was my only feminine trait at that time, and I was secretly sensitive about it, as it gave the boys, whom I envied with all my heart, a chance to tease me. So I kept the family of them hidden away in the little room I shared with my sister, and lavished all my caresses on them in secret.

One memory of this time shows me a side of myself which I find difficult to understand, for it must have come from a streak of cruelty which is absolutely foreign to the rest of my personality.

My greatest joy in life in those ranch days was to watch the chickens killed! I took a ghoulish delight in watching their struggles in the brawny hands of the yard man as he twisted their unfortunate necks, and danced up and down excitedly at their despairing "squarks". The final thrill of seeing them run jerkingly and horribly a few paces with headless and bleeding necks had for me all the fascination which the spectacle of a dozen Christian martyrs, delivered over to wild beasts, must have had for a Roman audience.

I am ashamed to remember how I looked forward to days on which I knew chickens would be killed, and how eagerly I awaited the coming of their executioner. When it was finished I would be trembling violently with a sort of nervous ecstasy, and I would go away thinking how only an hour before those mangled corpses had been pecking cheerfully in the farmyard. I have never been able to explain this infant sadism in myself, for in all other respects I was the most tender-hearted child in the world, and would sit for hours nursing a sick kitten or puppy, while I had my own name for every calf and sucking-pig on the farm.

My sister Elinor was a very different type of child. She was a prim little person, beautiful to look at, with her almond-shaped eyes, her delicate colouring and regular features. She was very neat and tidy in her appearance, too, and was far more interested in clothes

than I, the future dress-designer, was. She was one of those serious, good little girls, who are always popular with grown-ups, and never seemed to give any trouble, while I was always in and out of some scrape or other. And even in those days she was wonderful at telling stories. On a wet afternoon she would keep us enthralled for hours at the adventures of knights and princes and lovely ladies.

At the school we went to she was always at the top of the class, while I was rather a dunce. It was the funniest little school in the world, kept by a Miss Remmy and two other dear, quaint little old ladies. From them I learnt to sew and embroider beautifully, to recite from Cowper and Longfellow, to play short pieces on the piano (this was considered a rare accomplishment), and somehow acquired a smattering of arithmetic and history. Also I had my first love affair with a little freckled boy, a year or two older than myself, who used to do my sums for me, and bring me enormous apples to munch in class whenever I got the opportunity, which was often, as the dear old ladies were all shortsighted.

It was after I had been attending school for a year or so that I discovered the joy of making clothes, which has lasted all through these years with the same unabated interest. I tried my first creative inspirations on my dolls and dressed them in frocks and under-clothes made from every bit of material I could lay my hands on. I could be bribed to do any particularly loathed task with the promise of a piece of silk or velvet, and I used to spend hours patiently thinking out colour schemes for one or other of my dolls.

Of course all the little girls in the neighbourhood came to know that I was the owner of the best-dressed dolls, and I was keenly sought after to replenish the wardrobes of theirs. I used to love the work, although I generally took payment for it always in kind. Very

often it would be a remnant of material left over from their mothers' workbags, sometimes it would be fruit or sweets. But if they had nothing to give me I put the same amount of energy into the work, for I loved cutting out and sewing the minute garments, just as, many years after, I was to love creating some glorious ball-dress and setting a new fashion.

I can remember to this day some of the dolls' clothes I made. One hat I designed for a golden-haired, blue-eyed doll of my own pleased me especially. It was of pale yellow straw, and with the instinct of blending colours that was to make me world-famous later, I trimmed it with ribbons of gentian blue and cerise. It really looked lovely and I was very proud of it. I remember that I gave a dolls' party to show it off to my friends.

Other memories of Canada were not so pleasant. There was a definite obstacle to happiness in the severity of my grandmother, for I was always incurring her displeasure by my tomboy ways. Elinor, who was a quiet, lady-like little girl, was very rarely punished, but I hated the old lady, and some demon of mischief would force me to annoy her far more often than I need have done. Then I would be sent to my bedroom in disgrace until grandfather would intercede for me. I was his favourite, and although he too was in considerable awe of grandmama I always felt that I had in him an ally. Another devoted adherent of mine was Allen Walden, the old negro servant, who had been an escaped slave. I never tired of hearing the thrilling story of how his mother fled to Canada, with the bloodhounds on her trail.

My recollections of grandmama are chiefly associated with dreadful Sundays which used to seem an interminable waste of time to a child. One day in every seven was passed in misery, at least by most of the household, although we dared not rebel openly

against her rigid code of what was right and fitting for the Sabbath. "Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy" as interpreted by her meant turning it into a day of intolerable boredom. No books, no music except hymns, all toys put away, conversations restricted to religious subjects! How I hated it, and how often I was in disgrace for open rebellion! I can still remember long psalms and catechisms, which I was forced to learn in dreary penance.

It was partly, I think, on account of my grandmother's temper that Mother decided to marry again, so that her children could have a happier home. She has since told me that she never loved the elderly, Scottish gentleman, David Kennedy, who became her second husband, as she loved my father, but he was one of the kindest men on earth, and as he promised to look after Elinor and me, and send us to a good school, she felt it was right to give us the best possible chance in life.

Mother looked very sad, I remember, on her wedding-day, but I was jubilant at the thought of the voyage back to Scotland and the fact of leaving grandmother.

We sailed on the *Circassian*, Mr. Kennedy, whom we were now to call "Father", Mother, Elinor and I, and a whole family of dolls. I was practically the only passenger who was not seasick, and soon made friends with everyone on board. I used to go into the saloon and play a piece on the piano, which I had learnt at school. It was called "The Fairy Queen Waltz", and was full of little runs and trills, which sounded very difficult. The passengers were much impressed with it and I built up quite a reputation for myself as a pianist. I never knew the meaning of shyness, either then or at any other time in my life, and so I found it easy to make friends.

CHAPTER TWO

MY first impressions of England have been blurred by time. I cannot even remember where we landed, but I know that there was a fog, and we drove through wet streets, over which the faint, grey light of dawn was just breaking, turning the lamps into sickly yellow blobs. Even at that age I must have been intensely sensitive to colour, for I felt the depression of those drab streets and hated to think that my home was to be in such an ugly country.

Eventually we arrived at a little hotel, the only place we could find open at that time, and a slatternly woman brought us smoky tea and half-cold eggs and bacon. Then Elinor and I were put to bed in a huge four-poster, between sheets smelling of camphor, and when we woke it was late afternoon.

Before we had been in England many days we were taken up to Scotland to stay with our stepfather's relations. We went first to his brother's house, Balgreggan, on the Mull of Galloway, and I have often laughed since at the thought of the consternation our arrival must have caused at the beautiful old ancestral home. We were all dreadfully tired and bedraggled and very dirty after hours in the train, and it was obvious even to my childish perceptions that the stern Scottish family did not approve of the acquisition of the pretty young widow and her noisy offspring. Mother was terribly anxious that we should be on our best behaviour, and, of course, as children invariably do, we let her down and did everything to create an unfavourable impression.

When bedtime came we were sent off to our room,

a terrifying place it seemed to us, for it was shut off from the rest of the house and was led up to by a narrow, winding staircase, so dark that even with candles we stumbled up it. The room itself was not reassuring. It was enormous, with ghostly shadows and heavy tapestry hangings, revealing glimpses of panelled walls. At one corner was a little oak door, which opened on to another steep flight of steps leading to the tower. The bed, which was set back in an alcove, was so big that it could have easily accommodated six children like ourselves, and we were too frightened to draw its thick velvet curtains and shut ourselves in. For what seemed an interminable time we lay there in the dark scarcely daring to breathe, then suddenly I rent the silence with a succession of piercing screams. Terror had descended on me and even awe of my new stepfather could not keep me quiet.

Of course there was a great commotion, and Mother and the relations came rushing upstairs to see what was the matter. I refused to be left alone in the dark a moment longer, and continued to scream to the discomfiture of poor Mother, who had to listen to sharp comments on "undisciplined children". In the end we were allowed a nightlight, and the door was left open.

I was never really happy there, for both Elinor and I were very lonely, and the other children who came to stay there used to make fun of our colonial clothes and odd expressions, which we had picked up from the men on the ranch. The three smart English nurses, who were in charge of the juvenile members of the household, despised us and were always complaining of our tomboy habits, and punishing us for some crime or other.

After leaving Balgreggan we made a round of Scottish visits to various members of the Kennedy

family. They all seemed very much alike to me. Always the same old castles, the same dour, elderly butlers, the same huge and gloomy bedrooms. The aunts and cousins seemed very much the same too, thin, grizzled men, and rather weatherbeaten women, with soft, Scottish voices and kind smiles lighting up stern faces.

Then to London, where both Elinor and I were dreadfully disappointed to find that the streets were not paved with gold as we had imagined. On the ranch in Canada we had often talked of how rich we would be when we came to England, and the excellent, but very ordinary, hotel we stayed at in Great Portland Street fell far short of the romantic dwelling we had pictured.

"Never mind, Elinor, I'm going to be very rich in London one day," I said consoling her.

It was prophetic, although at the time nothing seemed less likely.

Our stay in London was a short one, for the elderly stepfather developed bronchitis, and was ordered to a warmer climate, and the whole family moved to Jersey.

When we arrived the harbour was decorated with flags and garlands of flowers were hanging from all the windows. We were told it was to celebrate the wedding of the Dean's daughter, Lily le Breton, the most beautiful girl in Jersey, who had been married that morning to Mr. Langtry and had gone away to London "to be a great lady".

We were both very curious about this lovely creature, stories of whose romantic career as a court beauty used to be circulated all over the Island. We were always hearing of what she had worn at the opera, of how she had set a new fashion in hats, and of how often the Prince of Wales had danced with her at the Devonshire House ball. When she used to come back to stay at her old home we were all agog with

excitement, and receptions were given in her honour at Government House. Nearly half the population used to go down to the Quay to cheer the boat which brought her ashore, and flags would be flying all along her route. It was almost like the arrival of a queen.

Elinor and I determined that come what might we would see the "Jersey Lily" and find out whether she was as beautiful as we had been told. It required some ingenuity on our part, as although we were very friendly with the Governor's family and his daughter, Ada, was our special playmate, we were too young to attend any of the formal parties at which Mrs. Langtry would be a guest. In the end we evolved the plan of hiding in the rooms in which she would take off her cloak at one of the receptions.

We stole out of our beds and dressing in the dark for fear of arousing suspicion if a light were noticed in our room, made our way to Government House. Ada let us in, and we crept upstairs like conspirators and hid under the dressing-table, draping the folds of white muslin, with which it was trimmed, so that they completely screened us, leaving only a tiny peephole.

We had some time to wait, for Lily Langtry always made her entry last of all the guests at a party, and one by one the women came upstairs to remove cloaks and shawls. It was the first time we had seen most of them in evening dress, and we had a great deal of fun comparing their dresses.

Just as we were beginning to feel intolerably cramped from our uncomfortable position crouched on the floor, a buzz of conversation and a light and very musical laugh on the stairs announced the arrival of Lily Langtry, and a moment later she came into the room.

I never saw any woman more divinely lovely than

she looked in her white dress, with a scarlet flower in her hair nestling against one ear. She came and sat down at the dressing-table while she arranged her dress and pinned a beautiful diamond brooch on one shoulder. We were so close to her that we dared not move one inch, for fear of touching her dress and giving away the secret of our presence, but even through the folds of the muslin curtain we could see her perfect beauty. There was an extraordinary radiance about Lily Langtry that I have never seen in any other woman, and there was something so vital and magnetic in her personality that a room seemed empty when she left it.

The years passed happily in Jersey, and slowly I emerged from a tomboy into a very feminine and, I think, rather an attractive young lady. I must have been attractive because in my first season I was engaged three times. None of the engagements lasted longer than a few weeks, for I was the most fickle thing on earth and used to have violent love affairs with the young officers who were stationed there, and then suddenly find that I liked someone else better and jilt them in the most heartless way. By the time I was seventeen I had left a trail of broken hearts, though it is a comfort to realize now that most of them were speedily mended.

I was not as beautiful as my sister Elinor, for I never had her classical regularity of feature, but I made many men think me the most beautiful thing in the world, and that is all that a woman need to do. I had the family red hair, which was very rare then, and a little laughing face. Also I had something which not a woman in a hundred had in those days—"chic". Nobody had even heard of the word in English until I brought it in later, although it has been sadly over-worked since. But I had that dress sense, which was a priceless asset to me then, and has been all my life.

I adored beautiful clothes and set about creating them for myself and my sister Elinor. I had only the smallest of dress allowances, but that did not worry me. I would just buy a few yards of material and make out of it a dress that would fill every other woman with envy. I studied my own type with as much care as I used to study, many years later, the types of women who came to consult me from all over the world. I found out exactly what suited me, and I decided to adopt an original style of dress, taking my inspiration from the pictures of the old masters.

I had one dress of which I was especially fond. It was in black velvet, which fell in soft folds to the feet, and there was a little tight bodice, which was finished with a deep belt. It could easily be worn to-day, which shows how little clothes change in their essentials from one generation to another.

Perhaps I loved this dress because it was the one I wore when I fell so seriously in love for the first time. Before that I had only been loved, and it was a new and wonderful experience. He was a young captain, not one of the usual group of officers who used to be in and out of our house every day, but a new-comer to Jersey, and I met him for the first time at a dance where I wore this black frock. He scrawled his name in big, bold letters for many dances on my programme, and indifferent to the feelings of my other partners I ruthlessly sat out time after time with him. That was the beginning of a romance which lasted for many months and gave me the most exquisite pleasure.

There is nothing in the world quite so beautiful as first love, with its seriousness and its shyness. We used to go skating together, or take long walks, and see all the homely everyday scenes with new eyes. I have loved other men since and known passion, which I could not then have even dreamed of, but I cannot

recall any sweeter time in my life than those months in Jersey.

It had to end, as first love so often does, in disappointment. Perhaps I let him know too plainly how much he meant to me, a fatal mistake in a love affair, since man should always be the hunter, perhaps I was too unsophisticated to hold him, or perhaps he was, like myself, fickle by nature. But whatever the reason he drifted away from me.

I was terribly hurt, and utterly incapable of coping with the situation. I still loved him and wanted him back desperately, although I would not even admit it to myself. I used to suffer agonies of grief in silence, for I was very proud and would hide up my wounds at all costs. I decided that there was only one thing to be done. I must let him see that I did not care. So to this end I married the next man who asked me, and he happened to be James Stuart Wallace. I met him when I was staying with some friends at a beautiful old country house, and he fell in love with me and proposed within a week.

I cannot pretend that anything but pique would have made me listen to him, for we were hopelessly unsuited to one another in every way, and he was more than twenty years older than I was. Still anything was better than eating out my heart for the man who had gone from me, and Jim was good-looking and successful enough to please any woman.

The night before my wedding I cried myself to sleep over the old love, and made up my mind to be a really good wife to the new.

I set myself to make the best of my marriage, but I was handicapped from the very start. I was only eighteen, remember, and a Victorian eighteen, not a self-reliant, modern girl. I had no real experience of men and no knowledge of men, and the code of those days made it practically impossible for a wife to do



MYSELF IN 1899

My waist in those days was 21 inches round it

anything other than put up with an unhappy marriage, if she had had the bad luck to make one.

We went to live at Cranford, near Hounslow, in a house that had belonged to old Morton Berkeley, which we rented from his nephew, Lord FitzHarding. I was very fond of that kindly, genial man, and he used to come and entertain us for hours with his stories. He belonged to a type which is fast dying out, even if it is not already extinct. He was the epitome of the "man about Town" of the "'nineties". He went everywhere, knew everyone and had the inner story of every scandal in London. He had a great sense of humour and a great knowledge of humanity. All these things combined to make Lord FitzHarding, who was called "The Giant", because he was so very small, a perfect raconteur, and I never got tired of listening to him.

I was very lonely in those days. I could have had, had I wished, a dozen lovers to console me, but although I liked the companionship of men, as I have liked it all my life, I would not listen to them.

We led a sort of Micawber existence, for the most part varied with bursts of affluence. When James had the money he would be generous to a fault, and because he was proud of me I always had money for beautiful clothes, although I insisted on making them myself.

One day I realized that I was going to have a child. I cannot say that I was anything but dismayed at the discovery. I was so young that I resented the physical discomfort intensely. Novelists always write of the wonder of the first months of approaching motherhood, but my own experience was the very reverse. In my scheme of life motherhood had no place. I was not in love with my husband, and I dreaded the thought of having a child. Also I was terribly worried at the prospect of the added expense, especially as our finances were then at the lowest ebb. However, I made up my mind to do my best for the child which

I was to bring into the world, and with that idea turned my thoughts to all I had read about prenatal influence.

I decided that my child should be both beautiful and musical. I smile to-day, remembering all the precautions I took and how seriously I gave my mind to them. To make up for my temporary loss of beauty I dressed myself in the loveliest clothes I could create. I toiled round picture galleries and museums concentrating on pictures and sculpture, and I used to play the piano for hours each day. Even that was not enough, for I wanted to take no chances on having a little music lover. I had at that time among my intimate friends the famous violinist Tivadar Nachez. Nearly every evening he used to come to the little house and play exquisitely to me while I sat entranced with the beauty of his music. Those hours were among the happiest I spent at Cranford, and I always feel a debt of gratitude to the great artist, who gave up so much of his time to me.

Unfortunately it did not have the desired effect, for the little daughter who was born to me hated music during her early childhood, and used to scream and tremble violently if anyone played the violin in her presence. So much for the prenatal theory.

She was, however, a beautiful baby, and although I had not wanted to be a mother I grew to love her dearly. She was a great compensation for my marriage. I called her Esmé.

CHAPTER THREE

AS I turn back the pages of the early years of my life I see the drab background of my marriage and divorce splashed with vivid patches of colour. There were the friendships I made and the memory of them is very sweet to me, for as one grows older one finds it ever harder to make real friends. It is, I think, only in youth that we give that spontaneous, selfless affection that goes to make a perfect understanding between two people.

I came to value my friends when they stood by me in a very bad time, and I can never be grateful enough for their loyalty and kindness.

When my little daughter was about five years old the wretchedness of my married life was suddenly ended. My husband left me and went away with a girl who was dancing in pantomime. There was nothing to do but divorce him and I started proceedings. I was left literally penniless, without any prospect of getting alimony, but my mother promised to pay the costs of the case, and took Esmé and me to live with her in her little house in Davies Street.

I dreaded the ordeal of the Court unspeakably, for divorce in those days was a very different matter from what it is now, and I had to run the gauntlet of public opinion. In the reign of Queen Victoria a woman who divorced her husband was considered "not quite nice", however flagrant her wrongs. Many of my friends tried their hardest to persuade me to withdraw the case, but my mind was made up, and I never regretted the decision. It was "Cheiro", the great Palmist, whose advice I took, which decided me.

Whether my reputation suffered through it or not I hardly know, for I was always the subject of gossip, but I never lost a single friend.

The case was all over in less than a quarter of an hour.

So I was left, still in my early twenties, to enjoy the first fruits of freedom.

I grew to love the independence of the little house in Davies Street and my room, now blessedly my own, and as the weeks passed I began to find new interests.

One of these was my friendship with Ellen Terry. I shall never forget my meeting with this brilliant and lovely woman. From my childhood I had been intensely fond of the theatre, and my mother used to fear that it would lead me to go upon the stage, of which she had the conventional horror of her generation. But although I had several offers to appear in different productions, and in later years became closely connected with the theatre, I never felt it my *métier*.

I used to go to the Lyceum to see Ellen Terry in every new play in which she appeared, and admired her intensely, and for years I had the wish to get to know her personally, but she was elusive in those days and went out very little, so our paths never crossed.

Then, during the run of *Faust* I was invited to a Colonial reception, which was given on the stage of the Lyceum, and introduced to her. Like everyone else I fell under the spell of her extraordinary charm, and when she asked me to call on her at her house in Longridge Road I was delighted. I was always warm and impulsive in my likes and dislikes, and I had a longing for a real friendship with this wonderful artist from the moment she spoke to me.

So a few days later I went to call on her and was shown into a room which seemed full of sunlight and flowers, where I found her sitting in the midst of a group of girls who were sewing. She was wearing a

flowing robe of blue velvet, and her fair hair was bound round her head like a coronet. She reminded me, in that first glimpse of her in her own home, of a medieval queen seated among her maids of honour. Although I went to the house many times I rarely saw Ellen Terry without her little circle of girls. I think that any one of them would gladly have laid down their lives for her sake. I never knew any woman who possessed in such a degree the art of inspiring affection in her own sex. She was not a young woman then, but she was the friend and confidante of dozens of girls, who adored her and loved to serve her in all sorts of little ways. They would do her shopping for her, arrange the flowers, dress her to go to the theatre, mend her clothes, and write her letters for her. Soon I became one of the group and was admitted to her house at all hours.

The charm of those quiet afternoons we spent lingers still with me. It was never that we did anything very special ; I cannot even remember what we talked about, but Ellen Terry had the gift of creating sunshine and happiness around her. Sometimes she used to read over one of her new plays to us, sometimes we just gossiped and sewed pieces of stuff, which she used to fish out of her large and very untidy workbag.

I never knew an untidier woman than she was. She could never find anything without a hunt that might last ten minutes. Every few weeks I and some of the other girls would have a big turn-out of her drawers and cupboards and leave them in apple-pie order, but in a day or two they would be as bad as ever. She was absolutely indifferent to dress, and thought very little of her personal appearance. Her hair was often tumbling down, and she would push it impatiently back from her face when she was interested in something. I could never persuade her to let me

make her a dress, although I used to drape pieces of material on her. It would have been impossible to picture her in fashionable clothes, they would not have suited her personality. Over her theatre clothes she was intensely particular, and would spend hours choosing her costumes, and studying her make-up.

I met many of the most interesting people of the theatre at her house. Henry Irving used to drift in and out at all hours, looking very eccentric sometimes. She understood him perfectly and always knew how to manage him. Once or twice I saw him in a towering rage, working himself up to fever heat over something that had happened at the theatre, but she could calm him in a moment. It always struck me that their association was one of closest friendship rather than of love. She told me the same herself.

“People always say that Henry is my lover of course. He isn’t. As a matter of fact he never sees further than my head. He does not even know I have a body.”

Another man I met there was J. L. Toole. There was something irresistibly droll in his personality off the stage. I remember once his coming in to supper with us at Ellen Terry’s house in Barkston Gardens, into which she had moved. He had just got back from his wife’s funeral, and began what was meant to be a sad recital of the procession and service. Somehow, quite unconsciously, he made it so funny that he had us in fits of laughter, although we did our best to smother our mirth out of decorum. In the end he began to laugh himself, till the tears ran down his cheeks.

“She would have laughed, too,” he said apologetically. “It was awfully funny.”

It seems incredible that in those days there were many people who looked askance at Ellen Terry, and I was often warned that I should damage my own reputation by being seen so often in her company.

She discussed this with me in the frankest possible way. We had come back to her house after the theatre, and she was having a late supper. I can see her now sitting before the fire in her crimson velvet dressing-gown, with the tray of fruit and sandwiches in front of her. I said something about how much her friendship meant to me.

"I wonder if you will always think that," she said, looking at me with those beautiful, candid eyes of hers.

"You know you are not very wise to be friends with me. I am not the right woman for a good little girl like you to know. I am what is called a woman with a past."

Staring straight before her into the fire she told me the tragedy of her life.

"As you know I married George Frederick Watts when I was little more than a child, and he was old enough to be my grandfather. I was really tremendously innocent, just a gay, little thing, without a serious thought in my head. I was fond of him, with a sort of daughterly affection, and I used to sit patiently for him for hours on end, sometimes in a dreadfully uncomfortable position with a heavy helmet on my head. You see I was a very kind little girl, and that kindness was my undoing.

"We had a great friend, William Godwin. He had been friendly with the family for years and both my husband and I were on terms of the most informal intimacy with him. We used to run in and out of his house whenever we wanted. I often visited him alone and nobody thought anything of it. Then one evening I went to see him and found him very ill in bed, with terrible sickness and pain. I was so distressed for him that I never even thought of the conventions or the construction that might be placed on my actions. I spent the whole night with him, and only returned

home the next morning, when he was well on the road to recovery. To my dismay my husband was waiting there for me with my parents in solemn conclave. They accused me of infidelity and seemed utterly horrified at what I had done in all innocence. I tried to explain that what they had imagined to be a night of love was spent in helping a sick man to and from the bathroom and heating poultices for him, but they would not believe me. They cast me out as a fallen woman, and my husband refused even to see me again.

"I implored the family to take my part, but they would not listen to my explanations and I had nowhere to go. In despair I turned to my supposed partner in adultery and begged him to help me to clear myself, but he either could not, or perhaps did not want to succeed with them. At any rate he was my only refuge and I went back to his house. It was some years before I grew to love him, but in the end I gave my heart to him."

Even after all these years I can recall her face as she told me the story of that disastrous night spent nursing the invalid, and how it was at once sad and then full of laughter. She had a wonderful sense of humour and could always laugh at her own mistakes. She was full of courage too, and a letter, which I took out the other day from the collection of her letters I have kept, reminds me of her indomitable spirit. It reads :

Lucy dear,

I'm glad you have been so happy. I have marked off Friday, 17th, for my box for you, because on the 18th there is only a matinée.

I'm ill. Only by resting in bed all day and every day can I act at night.

Yours affectionately,

NELL.

She was indeed ill when she wrote that letter, very ill, but the public never knew of it. During the time I knew her she often suffered from ill-health, but she concealed it from everyone but her closest friends.

Ellen Terry had many men in love with her, but I do not think she cared for any of them seriously. She was like Sarah Bernhardt, whom I came to know years later, wedded to her art. Men were only incidental to her happiness as a woman, not essential to it.

Another friendship, which had a great influence on my life at this time, was that of Sir Morell Mackenzie, the famous surgeon. Scarcely a day passed when we did not see something of each other, and I used to go to his house in Harley Street, where I was always shown straight into his consulting-room, no matter how many patients might be waiting to see him. If ever in my life I was proud of the conquest of a man's heart it was of this one, which was always reputed to be invincible, although nearly every woman in London was half in love with him.

In the evening, when his work was done, he would often come to see me at my mother's house in Davies Street, and I would play to him on the piano, for he was passionately fond of music. He spent the evening before his fateful journey to Germany to operate on the Emperor Frederick with me, and on his return told me all the strange story of the coronation of the man who was, to his certain knowledge, dying of cancer, but whose life he had managed to prolong for a few months, in order that he might reign. The Empress Frederick had insisted on sending for Morell Mackenzie, knowing that she could count on his loyalty, and had defied the German physicians in doing so.

The law had, of course, provided that no member

of the Royal House who was suffering from an incurable disease could be crowned, and her son, Wilhelm, was insistent on this point.

Morell told me before he left England that he fully realized the perils of his position, and it is an actual fact that more than one attempt was made on his life while he was in the Palace. All his food had to be guarded from poison, for political feeling ran so high when it was known that he meant at all costs to save the Emperor Frederick that Wilhelm's supporters would willingly have removed the obstacles to their intrigue.

On his return to England he was knighted, but it was an empty honour. The Empress Frederick showed an almost incredible ingratitude to the man who had helped her to attain her ambition, and stories were circulated which marred his career, and ultimately broke his heart. His death was a terrible grief to me.

It was through Sir Morell Mackenzie that I first met some of the most notable figures of the artistic world of that time. His Thursday evening parties were famous for their gatherings of celebrities. At one of them I met Oscar Wilde. I thought him the oddest creature I had ever seen, with his long, golden hair, his black velvet knee-breeches and the sunflower in his buttonhole. Gilbert had just made him the hero of his *Patience*, and everyone was quoting the "Greenery yallery, Grosvenor Gallery . . ." etc. Mrs. Wilde was an even stranger figure than her husband, and dressed with a total disregard of taste. She was about to become a mother, and was evidently very proud of the fact, for instead of trying to conceal it as Victorian decorum demanded with voluminous draperies, she wore the tightest dress I have ever seen ornamented with a sash of vivid scarlet. The effect was startling to say the least. However, both husband

and wife were tremendously popular and went everywhere.

Jessie Bond, then at the height of her fame in Gilbert and Sullivan productions and one of the "Three Little Maids", used to go to these Thursday evenings. She was a very charming woman, witty and amusing to talk to, and always made a great fuss of me.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOOKING back on it all it seems strange that the step which was to lead me to the greatest happiness I have ever known in my life should have been taken in a moment of intense sorrow.

When my husband went out of my life I was left practically penniless and with my little daughter to support. My mother came to my help at once and took us both to live with her, but I had to think of some means of making money, for she was not very well off, and there was Esmé's education and future to think of.

I realized that I must take up some sort of work, and racked my brains to decide what I could do well enough to be paid for it. I could play the piano quite well, but I was not optimistic as to a career on the concert platform. I did not care for the idea of going on the stage, and at that time very few women had even thought of going into business, and in any case I had had no training to fit me for secretarial work or anything of that sort. In the meantime the need for money was pressing, and I used to lie awake in my bedroom at the top of the house thinking about it night after night.

Then one morning, when I was making a little dress for Esmé, I had a flash of inspiration. Whatever I could or could not do I could make clothes. I would be a dressmaker.

I was so excited at the plan that I could scarcely eat any lunch. My mother was not wildly enthusiastic about it. It would need capital, she told me, and there would be a lot of competition to fear.

But I would not be discouraged. I assured her that the outlay would be practically nothing as I would do everything myself, and that I had no intention of taking expensive premises. I would find my clients from our personal friends.

The Hon. Mrs. Arthur Brand was my first. She came in to see us a few days after I had evolved my plan, and said that she had had an invitation to stay with Mrs. Panmuir Gordon, whose house-parties were famous. She wanted a new tea-gown to take with her, but was afraid there would not be time to fit it.

"I wish you would let me make you one," I said.
"I know I could get it done in time."

She was delighted at the idea.

"I have always wanted you to make me a dress, because you make your own and your sister's so beautifully, but I have never liked to ask you," she told me.

I began it right away, taking my inspiration from a tea-gown I had seen Letty Lind wear on the stage. It was all accordion pleated, and I did every stitch of it myself, nearly blinding myself working at night to get it finished in time.

Mrs. Brand was charmed with it, and promised to tell everyone where she had got it. I still have the photograph of that first dress I made. Years later I hung it in my room at Hanover Square, and I took it with me both to Paris and New York, when I opened new branches of "Lucile". I had a feeling that it was a good mascot to have it on the wall.

The dress certainly brought me luck whether the photograph did or not, for within a few days after making it for Mrs. Brand every woman who had been a member of that house-party had given me orders for tea-gowns, and I was hardly able to cope with them.

I studied the type of each one and designed a gown for her which I thought would harmonize with her

individuality, and they were all immensely intrigued at rediscovering themselves in my eyes. I think that many designers of the younger school are far too inclined to turn out their models *en masse*, regardless of the special needs of the women who will wear them, and so they lack personality and interest. I always saw the woman, not the frock as detached from her, and so women loved my clothes, because women are above all other things personal in every thought and action.

I explained this to the women who flocked to the little house in Davies Street, and they absorbed the theory at once. Everyone who heard of me wanted to have one of my "personal dresses", and I bought an imposing order book, and soon its pages were half-filled. I could not afford an assistant and not only designed the dresses myself, but cut them out and sewed them, working far into the night. When they were finished I used to wrap them up and deliver them myself.

I have often laughed, looking back at those early days of "Lucile", remembering how the entire staff of the famous dressmaking house, which was to employ hundreds of workpeople, consisted of one little girl, who used to cut out her models on the dining-room floor, with a watchful eye on the sticky fingers of her baby daughter.

An American millionaire once told me that all great business successes sprang from a small beginning. Certainly nobody could have begun in a smaller way than I did, without capital, without help of any sort, and with no advertisement except the gossip of the women whose dresses I made, and who spread the pathetic story of the young wife who had been deserted and was trying to earn a living for herself and her little girl.

By the end of the first six months of my venture I

had made so much money that I was able to launch out and engage four girls. One of them was an expert fitter, who relieved me of the most tiresome part of the work and left me free to create new models. At that time nobody had ever heard or even thought of having mannequins, and it was not until many years later that I made dressmaking-history by staging the first mannequin parade. My first clients chose their dresses from sketches which I drew for them, and these were never copied for any other woman.

I had my first big success when I was asked to design the dresses for the amateur performance of *Diplomacy*, which Lord Rosslyn got up for some charity. He was a very talented actor and took the principal part himself, my sister Elinor played Dora, and Mrs. William James took the part of the adventuress. I designed beautiful dresses for them both, which created quite a sensation in London, and something more than a sensation in Edinburgh, where the play was given for the second time, for they were pronounced "too daring" there and shocked some of the women in the audience. However, they brought me success.

That was the very first play I ever dressed. I see it now as the stepping-stone which was to lead to designing all the costumes for some of the greatest successes that the London stage has ever seen, as well as for Ziegfeld's wonderful shows in New York. But none of them ever gave me the sense of triumph I felt when I looked at the programme of that amateur performance and read "Dresses designed by Mrs. James Wallace."

My sister's marriage was another event in the infancy of my business, for I made her dress and those of her bridesmaids. I forget now what they were like, but I know that the child bridesmaids had touches of yellow on their dresses, which caused a lot of comment,

for it was the first fashionable wedding to make a departure from the traditional white. Elinor made a very lovely bride, and I had designed her a medieval head-dress which suited her to perfection. I thought that, as she walked down the steps of St. George's, Hanover Square, with Clayton Glyn her husband, she looked like the living incarnation of a fairy-tale princess.

Other wedding orders followed my sister's. One of them was for Sir Ernest Cassel's daughter, Maud, who was marrying Wilfred Ashley. She was a strange girl, very brilliant, but subject to fits of intense depression, and nervous and highly-strung to the last degree. She was, I think, a tragic example of the danger of having too much money, for she told me many times that she was insufferably bored with life. She had everything to make her happy, but was less happy than almost any other woman I have ever known. Later I got to recognize the same state of mind in many of the American heiresses I met. It is a tragedy for a young woman to have too little to wish for, for the real sorrow of all of us lies in the fulfilment of our desires, not in the quest for them.

By this time I was building up a clientele which was growing too large to be confined within the limits of my mother's little house, and I decided to move to premises in Old Burlington Street, where there would be more room. I was particularly anxious to have a department for beautiful underclothes, as I hated the thought of my creations being worn over the ugly nun's veiling or linen-cum-Swiss embroidery which was all that the really virtuous woman of those days permitted herself. With the arrogance which success was beginning to give me I vowed to change all that, and made plans for the day of chiffons and laces, of boudoir caps and transparent nightdresses. I was so sorry for the poor husbands, who had to see their wives



ELINOR GLYN
at the time she wrote *Three Weeks*

looking so unattractive at night after taking off the romantic dresses I had created.

So I started making underclothes as delicate as cobwebs and as beautifully tinted as flowers, and half the women in London flocked to see them, though they had not the courage to buy them at first. Those cunning little lace motifs let in just over the heart, those saucy velvet bows on the shoulder might surely be the weapons of the woman who was "not quite nice"? They all wanted to wear them, but they were not certain of their ground. They had to fly in the face of the conventional idea as to how a good woman went to bed at night—and it took a little coaxing for them to do it.

Slowly one by one they slunk into the shop in a rather shamefaced way and departed carrying an inconspicuous parcel, which contained a crêpe-de-Chine or a chiffon petticoat, and although one or two returned to bring the new purchases sorrowfully back because a Victorian husband had "put his foot down", the majority came back to order more.

Once I remember Jack Cumming came into the shop to call for his wife who was having a fitting. She had just left, but a pile of my newest and filmiest undies lay on the table in front of him. Picking them up he exclaimed wrathfully :

"No virtuous woman would be seen in such things."

"I'm sorry you feel like that about it," I told him, "because they are just going home to your wife, who has ordered them."

They did not come back, however, and the cheque for payment, although it was an unusually large one, arrived the next day.

Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, was one of the most essentially "good" women I have ever known, but she made her goodness one of her greatest charms, for there was such a joyous spontaneous gaiety about her that endeared her to everyone. She came and saw my

undies, that the frumps of the old school were calling so "improper", but she was not in the least shocked at them. On the contrary she bought different sets to match every one of her dresses, and even ordered satin corsets in the same colours. I never heard that her virtue suffered in any way through this departure from Victorianism.

Mrs. Freeman Thomas, who is now Lady Willingdon, was another woman who had a *flair* for dressing well, and she also wore my lovely underclothes. I remember one of the first things I made for her was a tea-gown of grey chiffon over a dress of grey brocade, trimmed with some of her priceless family lace. It had a wide sash of mauve, and the cuffs were finished off with big bands of sable. Underneath it she wore a mauve petticoat trimmed with the same lace. It was one of the most beautiful models I ever designed.

With the move from Davies Street to 24, Old Burlington Street, I dropped the "Mrs. James Wallace" and blossomed out as "The Maison Lucile", which sounded far more impressive. I engaged a diminutive page boy, who was to take round the parcels, and increased the workroom staff.

It was about this time that I took on a little fourteen-year-old apprentice, Celia, who used to run errands and match silks, and generally make herself useful. Celia had the most wonderful head for business of anyone I have ever come across. She had not been with me for more than a few months when I discovered that she knew not only her own job, but everybody else's. Of course she was promoted and went through the different departments until she became my right hand in the days when "Lucile's" had branches in Paris, London and New York.

I could always depend on Celia; in the long years we worked together she never failed me once, and her loyalty and common sense were invaluable. When

we opened in Paris it was Celia who went over with me and got the new branch on its feet. She taught herself French, in order to cope with the French fitters and midinettes, and when I had to return to England I knew that I could safely leave her there, certain that everything was being run as well as I could have run it myself.

When we opened in New York Celia was sent over to choose the premises and get everything in readiness, and it was she who helped me to make it the successful venture it was.

After being with me many years she married Mr. Rena, who is well-known in the restaurant world, and she at once set to work to learn his business as thoroughly as she learnt dressmaking. Her husband is now managing director of the Criterion.

At about the same time I engaged Margaret and Elsie, two of the best saleswomen I ever had, and Edith, who was a wonderful fitter. They all remained with me through nearly the whole of my career as "Lucile", and I was deeply grateful to them for the loyal service they gave me.

It was the production of *The Liars* that finally established my name, and brought me in a long series of plays to dress. Sir Charles Wyndham, who was responsible for the production, had heard of the "personality dresses" I was creating to harmonize with the characteristics my clients suggested to me, and he conceived the idea of having the same sort of thing for the play. So he asked me to call and see him, and the upshot of our conversation was that I went away with an order to design dresses for Irene Vanbrugh, Mary Moore and Cynthia Brooke.

At that time nearly all stage dresses were heavy, thick affairs, which were supposed to express magnificence, but in reality gave their wearers a clumsy appearance. Nobody had yet thought of the possibilities

of chiffon, or if they had they had dismissed the idea, as such a material was said to be too clinging for stage use. When I told Irene Vanbrugh that I intended to make her a dress of buttercup yellow chiffon, she looked doubtful.

“You have a lovely figure,” I told her. “Why try to blur its lines with something that hangs in heavy, lifeless folds?”

In the end she agreed with me, and I promised to make her a dress that would create a sensation. When it was finished she looked radiant, and overwhelmed me with thanks. But it was very nearly the occasion of a rift in the production. I had made Mary Moore a dress of coffee-coloured lace, embroidered with sequins. It seemed to me to suit her perfectly, but it had long sleeves, which I had not known she particularly disliked. She refused to wear it, said that I was trying to make her look old and that she could not possibly be anything but self-conscious in it. I was distressed about it for all this took place at the dress rehearsal, and there was no time to make another.

Fortunately for me Sir Charles Wyndham took my side and said the dress was charming, and that it was on no account to be changed. He did not, he said, intend to have his play spoilt by Mary Moore’s whims. So there was nothing more to be said and Mary Moore wore it for the first night. She had one of the greatest triumphs of her career, and generously wrote and told me so, completely taking back her previous objections. After that I made many dresses for her and she always let me have my own way in designing them.

Another milestone of those early days I remember very well was the perfect trousseau I made for Mrs. Willie James to take to Russia with her, when she went to attend the coronation of the late Czar. There were at least nine or ten evening dresses and the dresses she wore for the Coronation, and the Court trains and

cloaks, house-gowns for morning wear and dresses and coats for every occasion. I sacrificed nearly a week's sleep to get them done in time, but the result was worth it, for after that orders poured in, and many of the foreign women, who had been there for the coronation celebrations, came over to England specially to have dresses designed by me.

Mrs. Willie James was a beautiful woman, and she had the art of wearing her clothes perfectly and an indefinable something that made her very attractive. She always looked very elegant and very distinguished, and as a hostess she has never been surpassed. At that time she was the leader of fashion in London, for in those days fashions were set by just one or two women, and the rest followed suit. Lily Langtry was another who was always the first to wear any new mode, but her taste was more extreme than that of Mrs. Willie James, and women were not so ready to follow her however much they might admire her distinctive type of dressing.

The fact that I dressed Mrs. Willie James was in itself a claim to supremacy, and as she wore my creations at all the Court functions she attended I knew that they could not fail to cause comment, and send me other clients. I had heard that the dresses she took with her to Russia had been immensely admired, so I was rather surprised when she came to see me the day after her return to London and seemed depressed and unlike herself. She told me that she had not been able to shake off a feeling of sadness since the coronation ceremony of the Czar. She had, she said, seen an extraordinary shadow extended over the Czar during the whole of the proceedings. It was, she explained, like a gigantic, human figure, with its hand outstretched, but quite nebulous, and it struck her as indescribably sinister. As she had never been in the least psychic and had a strong aversion to dabbling in

the occult she had been greatly troubled by it, particularly as she feared it might have some warning to convey to herself or her family.

I assured her that I was quite certain that such an apparition, if indeed she had really seen it, and not imagined she had done so (she strenuously denied this), could have no relation to anyone but the Czar. She agreed and told me that she was quite sure it had meant to convey some warning, and that she felt she ought to tell him of it at some future time. Whether she ever did so or not I do not know, for I forgot about it until recently.

It was, I think, about this time that I first made the acquaintance of "the beautiful Mrs. Atherton", as everyone called her. She came to me and asked me to design her several dresses. She was, as I remember her, a very lovely woman, for the train of tragedies which culminated in her being found dead, shot by her own hand in her flat in Shepherds Market some years ago, had not then touched her life. It was before the notorious divorce case, which ruined her and lost her both her friends and her position in society, and she was then perfectly happy and adored her little son, who was a very handsome and intelligent little boy. He often came to the showrooms with his mother and would wait patiently while she was fitted.

One day she came alone and asked the fitter to be as quick as possible as she was in a hurry. She had promised to take her little boy shopping to choose his birthday present, and he was to call for her in the carriage. While her dress was being tried on a messenger arrived with the dreadful news that there had been an accident. Mrs. Atherton's horses had shied at a performing bear and bolted, overturning the carriage. Her little boy had been instantly killed. The news was broken to her as gently as possible, but from that moment she was a changed woman.

The fitter told me afterwards that she had been surprised at the calm way in which Mrs. Atherton had taken the terrible shock. She had gone deathly white, but had not cried out and had even helped the girl to unpin her dress. When she left the room she thanked her in the usual way. I know that it was the calm of utter despair, for her heart was broken. Had her child lived I am certain that the story of her life would have been very different. As it was I do not think she cared what became of her, and only sought to forget her sorrow by any means.

CHAPTER FIVE

AS time went on the business got far too big for the house in Old Burlington Street, which had seemed such a courageous venture when we took it, and I set about finding more suitable premises. It was not easy, for London's commercial area was infinitely more restricted in those days than it is now, and whole streets and squares, which have now been turned into shops and offices, were then given over to private residences. I found several houses that I would have liked, but was not allowed to rent them for business purposes, and I grew quite discouraged in the quest.

Then, one day I was sent by an agent to Sir George Dashwood's house at 17, Hanover Square, and immediately fell in love with it. It was a glorious old house, with wonderfully carved chimney-pieces and Angelica Kauffmann ceilings, whose beauty would, I felt, be an unfailing source of inspiration to me. Although the rent was considerably more than I had intended to pay, I signed the lease there and then, and in little over a week we were installed.

In that lovely setting I was able to express myself as I had never done before, and my clothes became the talk of London. I rarely came now into the showrooms myself, for I had an excellent staff of saleswomen to deal with clients. I had my own room set apart from the others, and here I would shut myself up for hours with yards of material, out of which I would create tea-gowns and ball dresses, dainty little frocks for debutantes and sophisticated models that looked the last word in wickedness.

Sometimes I would find the mood come on me when

I would turn out two or three dresses in a day, at others inspiration would come slowly and I would pass the whole day making one dress, shut away by myself, with a girl stationed at the door to keep out intruders, for I had a hatred of the least interruption while I worked. At these moments I was an artist, nothing more. As the sculptor sees his dreams translated into line, and the painter sees his in terms of colour, so mine were expressed in the drapery of a wisp of chiffon, or the fall of a satin fold. It is a lesser form of art, I know, but to me it meant a great deal, my life's work, and I was tremendously in earnest over every dress I created.

It would be at about this time, I think, that I first met Margot Asquith. She walked into the shop one morning and asked for me.

"I hear that you design the most beautiful dresses in London," she began with her characteristic frankness. "Personally, I hate English clothes, so I get nearly everything I wear from Paris, but I would like to have one dress from you, and if I like it I will get some more."

Probably if anyone else had spoken so bluntly I should have been offended, but there was something so disarming in her candour and her smile was so charming that I succumbed to it at once. I was interested, too, at the prospect of creating clothes for this vivid, restless creature, and I realized that she could wear dresses which not one woman in a thousand could carry off.

I made her a tea-gown. It was the first of many, for she was delighted with it. She used to come to the showroom and sit and talk to me. Margot Asquith was one of the very few people whom I liked to have by me when I was working. She stimulated me with extraordinary vitality, although she had exactly the reverse effect on many of her acquaintances. It is

impossible to be unconscious of her magnetism; either one is recharged by it or exhausted. She was exceedingly kind to me and sent all her friends to have their dresses designed by me.

By this time although the business was growing by leaps and bounds I was beginning to feel the lack of ready capital behind me, for I had often to lay out hundreds of pounds in materials and there was an enormous wage bill to meet each week. I was very young to bear the responsibility of it all, and I used to lie awake at night worrying over the difficulties of making my clients pay their bills. The worst of it was that at least two-thirds of them were my own personal friends, which made it impossible to press for payment. They were all rich women, and they could never have realized the amount of worry their bills caused me. This is one of the most serious handicaps which dressmakers have to face, for it seems to be an established fact that the richer people are the more difficult it is to make them pay their bills. At one time I was nearly ruined by the amount of money outstanding, and I dared not press for it lest I should lose my clients.

I remember one dire afternoon in the early days in Hanover Square. It was the day on which I had to pay all the workpeople, and I had not a penny in the bank. I went into my room and faced the prospect of bankruptcy and the end of my dreams with all the courage I could summon up. There was nothing else to be done. It was a very black moment and I suppose my face must have reflected something of what I was feeling when I went out into the showroom again. I was just going to summon up the saleswomen and tell them what had happened when the door opened and Lord de L. W. walked in.

"You look very unhappy, madame, what is the matter?" he asked me.

There seemed to be no use in hiding what everyone would have to know the next day, and I told him.

"How much do you want?" he asked. "I can easily lend you £1,000," and went to my bank and signed for an overdraft which was paid back within a week, and from that day the Maison Lucile was saved. Such a lack never occurred again.

But it had given me a dreadful jar, and a little while later I turned the business into a company and took in Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, who by that time was becoming a very dear friend, and Mr. Miles of the firm of Jocelyn, Miles & Blow.

It was a great relief to me, for it left me free to leave the business side of it, which had always been a worry and responsibility to me, and concentrate on designing models.

With the capital they brought in we were able to make several improvements and new fitting-rooms were added. In connection with these I remember that one of them was the source of much amusement to the girls. They discovered that there was a hole at one corner of the staircase, which was just covered with paper. By lifting this they were able to see into the fitting-room without being observed themselves.

One client, a famous actress, used to meet one of her admirers regularly there, unaware that the love scene between them was being watched by curious eyes. One day, hearing the sound of suppressed laughter on the stairs, I went to investigate and found half a dozen girls gathered round the peep-hole. I was very angry and had the wall plastered up at once.

Much as I loved the house at 17, Hanover Square, we did not stay very long there. Everything was going smoothly and we were making record profits when suddenly Sir George Dashwood decided to return to

the house himself, and gave us notice to leave in a few weeks. We were in a very difficult position, for it was practically impossible to find suitable premises at such short notice, and worst of all, it was just before the Courts, and we were in the throes of making presentation dresses. The move could not have come at a more unfortunate time. After desperate efforts we managed to get a roof over our heads at 14, George Street, but we were dreadfully cramped there, and could not hope to do even half the business we had done at the Hanover Square house. There was no place to show the models, and very few fitting-rooms, but the house was the best we could find, and very regretfully we moved in there.

It did us a great deal of harm, for our enemies immediately spread the story that we were going bankrupt and had had to give up the house in Hanover Square because we could no longer pay the rent. We lost ever so many of our regular clients through these reports, and because they did not care for the inconvenience of the smaller house. I have always been grateful to Margot Asquith for the loyalty she showed me at this bad time. She not only continued coming to me herself, but persuaded all her personal friends to refute the gossip that was going the rounds about our failure, and secured me many new orders.

In the end, after a great deal of trouble, we found the house that was exactly right for us—in Hanover Square again, only at number 23 this time. It was even more suited to us than 17 had been, for there were more rooms, and the big ballroom was ideal for the main showroom. We had to wait for nearly two years while the other tenant's lease expired, but it was worth it.

In the meantime I turned over another page in my life.

In 1900 I was married to Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon.

During the years in which I was so busy making myself independent, and taking care of my little daughter, I managed to find the time for many love affairs. Some of them are very sweet to remember now. A French writer once said that "the follies of our youth are the fires which warm our old age", and it is true, I think. I am grateful now for those years in which I lived my life to its fullest extent. But all my loves led up to my marriage with Cosmo, the great love of my life.

In those days it was almost impossible for a woman, young, good-looking and free, to lack suitors, so I hope I shall not be accused of vanity in saying that I had many proposals. It was very much easier for a young woman to get love from men then than it seems to be now, for the attitude to love of the present generation is so different from that of mine. When I was a young woman marriage meant something more than it does to-day, and though there were exceptions, like my own first marriage, the majority of marriages were happy. Women were far more necessary to men in those days than they are now, and so men tried to hold them and set themselves to please them. They kept romance alive in a hundred little ways, sent flowers and presents, waited on them and were made miserable by the least snub.

I am not only writing now of my own experiences, but during my career as a dressmaker I saw the progress of hundreds of the love affairs of other women. I saw girls who were not particularly beautiful and had only the charm of youth and health and vitality married and loved devotedly by men who had everything to offer, and I saw the women who were rigidly cold-shouldered by their own sex as "not quite nice" making fortunes as the wages of sin. Those were the days of the great courtesans, for whom men ruined themselves, the days when a lover would come into the

showroom and order a thousand guinea sable coat as a peace offering after a slight quarrel.

The Victorian woman was far more fortunate as a wife and as a mistress than the girl of to-day. But she was also, I think, far wiser. She knew when to refuse and that is an art which her successor has forgotten. We were all taught certain good, old-fashioned maxims in love, handed from one generation to another. "Men never care for anything they are sure of. They get bored with obvious devotion," was one of them. "Never go after a man, let him come after you," was another. "Refuse him two kisses out of every three" . . . and so on.

Every woman learnt them and put them into practice, for they were all part of the technique of love as we understood it. But they have gone out of fashion to-day. I was repeating them to a young girl of my acquaintance the other day, and although she looked thoughtful she assured me that the present generation of men would not react at all favourably to them.

"What would be the good of refusing two kisses out of every three when the woman next door would be ready to give him four?" she asked.

I saw her point.

I have nothing but admiration for the modern girl. I love her independence, and her self-assurance and crisp outlook on life, but I think she errs on the side of asking too little from men, and giving them too much. There is something in us all that makes us inclined to undervalue the thing we can get too easily, and man was primevally intended to be the hunter. When he finds no resistance he loses interest in the quest. The Victorian woman knew that her strength lay in her restraint, she knew when and how to say "No", and she ostracized the woman who offended against her code, not so much out of prudishness as

because she was a blackleg who put down the standard of love.

In the days when I was young we took love far more seriously than it seems to be taken nowadays. If a man asked a woman to marry him and share his life it really meant "Till death do us part", and if she was a woman of a different type and he made her his mistress he recognized a sense of responsibility towards her and provided for her future. Love has lost much of its romance since it began to be tossed about so freely between men and women. The modern man will not do as much for women as his father and grandfather would have done when they were young, but then the modern girl does not expect as much of him as her grandmother would have expected. She is ready to meet him more than half-way, and that I think is her mistake. But it is very easy to be wise and moralize over other people's mistakes, and had I begun life forty years later I expect I should have done just the same as the girls of to-day.

Another truth that I have to admit is that life was very much simpler at the beginning of this century than it is to-day, and the young men of those days did not have to contend with the economic difficulties that have come about since the War. Nowadays we are all so much occupied in keeping our heads above water that much of the fineness of life has had to go by the board.

One thing I do sincerely envy is the freedom of the modern girl, for I was one of the generation who fought so hard to get it for her. I shall never forget the wall of prejudice which I had to storm. To begin with I was one of the first women, if not actually the very first of my class, to go into the business world, and I lost caste terribly in doing it at the start of my venture. Old family friends came and solemnly warned me and my mother of the utter impossibility of my going into

"trade" . . . the very word was spoken with bated breath, as though it was only one shade better than going in for crime. I was told that nobody would know me if I "kept a shop", it would be bad enough for a man but for a woman it would mean social ruin.

However, I ran the gauntlet of their pained surprise as I had to make a future for my beautiful Esmé—now the wife of Lord Halsbury—and when they had recovered from the first shock of my "obstinacy" they came round to my point of view, for you can always win over your opponents provided you are sure enough of your own ground, and I was perfectly sure of mine. Gradually the new venture which had been regarded by so many of my mother's friends as a lamentable eccentricity on my part came to be accepted as an established fact, and the women whom I had fitted in my workrooms in the morning were eager to have me as a guest at dinner in their homes at night, but I always refused these invitations because, if I accepted, my clients expected 5 per cent off their bills.

But I could never be presented at Court, because I was "in trade", even after I married Cosmo. Not that I ever wanted to be, for I have a horror of formalities, and have always been rather a Bohemian, shunning social obligations rather than seeking them, but he would have liked me to go to Court with him, and so I was sorry.

Which brings me back again to my second marriage.

I had met Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon very soon after divorcing my first husband, and he fell in love with me from the first moment he saw me. But at that time I had no intention of marrying again, much as I liked him, and apart from that there was another obstacle to any engagement between us in the person of his mother, who was an ardent follower of the High Church party and looked upon divorce as anathema. No son of hers, she said, should ever marry a woman

who had divorced her husband, no matter how much she had been wronged. I knew how devoted Cosmo was to his mother, and made up my mind that I would never be the cause of a quarrel between them, especially as she was very delicate and it was known that a shock might prove fatal. So I turned a deaf ear to his proposals, and put all thoughts of marriage to him out of my head.

In the early spring of 1900 I was very run down, for I had been working for years without a holiday, and in the end I grew really ill so that my doctor ordered me complete rest for three months. I went with my mother to Monte Carlo, where I had a glorious time basking in the sunshine of the Mediterranean. After a few weeks I was so much better that I ceased living the life of an invalid, and began to go out and enjoy myself at the Casino and at the fêtes which were given at the Palace by the Prince of Monaco, a jolly old man with the bluff manners of a country farmer, and a passion for deep sea fishing.

At one of these I renewed the acquaintance, which had been begun in London, with Lord C . . . In the ensuing weeks he fell very much in love with me and several times asked me to marry him. In the end I said "Yes", though I stipulated that I did not want our engagement to be announced until after our return to London. But we had calculated without the gossips. Of course the news leaked out. By this time the season was ending at Monte Carlo and my mother and a girl friend and I went on to Venice. Lord C . . . followed us there. A few days afterwards I received a telegram from Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon saying : "If you are going to marry anyone it is going to be me."

I had scarcely got over the surprise of it when Cosmo himself arrived at the hotel. His mother had died and he was determined that no one else should stand in the way of our marriage. When I saw him I

realized that I had never really wanted to marry anybody but Cosmo, but I was rather distressed at the thought of explaining it all to Lord C . . . However, I was saved the trouble for he and Cosmo met in the lounge, and after a dreadful quarrel challenged one another to a duel. In the end my mother made them both see reason, especially as I, not being able to think of any other tactics, went to bed and said I was very ill with the worry of it all. Lord C . . . left the hotel, but he never spoke to Cosmo after that although they often met when we returned to London.

So on May 24th I became Lady Duff Gordon. We were married in Venice from the house of Mr. and Mrs. Eden, friends of Cosmo's, and the wedding took place at the British Consul's, and afterwards we went to a large reception in their dream garden, on an island near Venice. I shall always remember the beauty of it and the scent of the roses. But it was funny that I, who had created so many lovely wedding dresses for other brides, should have chosen to be married myself in quite an old frock. I was so happy, and I wanted to forget all about clothes and anything that reminded me of the business for the time.

We spent our honeymoon in Abazzia, and bathed all day long. I was very fond of swimming and I think that Cosmo was quite surprised that I, whom he had imagined so typically feminine and clothes-loving, had brought only two dresses with me, and one of them was a bathing dress. I could beat him at swimming and diving too, to his great astonishment. The reason was, of course, that I used to swim nearly every day in Jersey, and was only too glad to have the opportunity of doing so again.

Those days at Abazzia were some of the happiest in my life, for we were both very much in love, and the place was the most perfect background for a honeymoon. We both hated coming back to London, but

I did not want to give up my business career, and I could not leave it for very long. There was also the move to 23, Hanover Square to be considered, and I knew that I should have to be back for this, as it would entail endless planning and there was a great deal to be done to the house in the way of decoration and furniture before it could be ready for us.

CHAPTER SIX

I SHALL never forget the thrill of seeing my name, "Lucile", outside the beautiful old house in Hanover Square: it seemed the embodiment of all my dreams. I told Margot Asquith so, and she kissed me affectionately.

"Dear Lucy, you will go much further than that," she said. "The time will come when you will be the greatest dress designer in the world. All you need to do is to impress yourself on people by setting a high value on your own gifts. People tell me I'm clever, and that is where my cleverness comes in, making them think I am."

I remember her so well as she said this, sitting on one of the grey chairs I had installed in the salon, waving her long, slender hands, with her finely-cut profile thrown out vividly against the grey satin curtain.

"I should like to sketch you as you are now," I said impulsively.

"What you are going to do is to design me a dress," she replied. "You know I am supposed to be lucky to people, and I am going to be lucky to you. The very first dress you make in this house is going to be for me."

I worked hard at it, for she was very *exigeante*. She would never have any model the least like anyone else's. No good even to try to persuade her to adapt a design which some other woman had launched.

"I may be plain, but at least I'm original," she would say, "and I mean to look it."

So I used to create dresses which expressed to me

her own vital, stimulating personality, and feel ridiculously pleased with any praise she gave me, for that is one of the things about Margot, you always feel quite disproportionately pleased when she takes any notice of you.

By this time my fame had spread, and the Square would be lined with carriages every morning and afternoon, while in the discreet little fitting-rooms would be women of all ages waiting to consult me. Sometimes I would take a peep at them as they came in, and if I thought they would never be able to do me justice I would send one of the girls to tell them that Lucile was too busy for any consultations that day. Very often they did not come back, for they had caught a glimpse of my dresses, and found them too revolutionary for their liking. It seems so silly now that we have just got over wearing skirts above our knees and showing our backbone below the waist to think that those demure little morning dresses and diaphanous tea-gowns I made were once considered by many people "too daring"; but they were. Matchmaking mothers would stare anxiously at their daughters when I had dressed them in something that showed every line of their lithe young bodies and murmur:

"Are you quite sure, dear Lady Duff Gordon, that it does not look too suggestive?"

As if there could be anything "suggestive" in youth and grace and beauty.

But in spite of the fact that I dressed royal ladies, and so was smiled on by the immediate Court circle, I shocked a great many people, who brought against me the terrible indictment (in those days) of making "stagey" clothes.

I took it as a compliment, for in those days virtue was too often expressed by dowdiness, and I had no use for the dull, stiff, boned-bodiced brigade. I had a message for the women I dressed. I was the first

dressmaker to bring joy and romance into clothes, I was a pioneer. I loosed upon a startled London, a London of flannel underclothes, woollen stockings and voluminous petticoats, a cascade of chiffons, of draperies as lovely as those of Ancient Greece, of softly-rounded breasts (I brought in the brassière in opposition to the hideous corset of the time, which was distorting women's figures) and draped skirts which opened to reveal slender legs. If I never did anything else in my life I showed the world that a woman's leg can be a thing of beauty, instead of a "limb" (in the correct parlance of those days), which was only spoken of in the privacy of the fitting-room. I don't think that I spread a cult of "immoral dressing", a charge which some of the old dowagers accused me of, but I did get rid of a lot of false modesty.

Incidentally I made history as far as dressmaking is concerned. The evolution of the mannequin was brought about in my grey salons in Hanover Square. Down the steps into that beautiful Adams room, with its Angelica Kauffmann ceiling, its gilt chairs and couches that had been brought over from Paris, tripped the first of a long line of sylphs, destined to reach down the years and to survive so long as there are dressmakers, whose purpose it is to lure women into buying more dresses than they can afford.

To-day you have dress parades in every shop in Paris and London, where the latest models are displayed on the aristocratic shoulders of some Russian Princess whose elegance is calculated to encourage a due humility in the hearts of the rich bourgeoisie, in Tooting or Balham, where Lizzie or Hetty does her best to emulate the walk of Mr. Cochran's young ladies to beguile the suburban housewife's afternoon. But when I moved into Hanover Square a dress parade was a thing unheard of.

In those days one paid a visit to one's dressmaker

and was received into the uncompromising atmosphere of a shop, with hard chairs, a few unbecoming mirrors and a door, which opened on to a little fitting-room. Nobody had thought of developing the social side of choosing clothes, of serving tea and imitating the setting of a drawing-room. Trying on, or selecting clothes, was a thing of as much secrecy as fitting a wooden leg might be expected to be.

In many of the then fashionable dressmakers' establishments the models were displayed on horrid lay figures—dreadful affairs of sawdust and wax faces, calculated to inspire a positive revolt against whatever dress they happened to be attired in. Then, greatly daring, some resourceful soul conceived the idea in Paris of having living models.

But there was no parade, oh ! dear no ! nothing so frivolous. Remember, they were fighting prejudice. A good woman had to look good, or her virtue was not to be believed in. There must be nothing which might shock the susceptibilities of the *grandes dames* who visited the salons, nothing which might suggest that the poor little mannequin had a personality of her own, that she was capable of any more emotion than the sawdust dummy, which she replaced. She must not show the glow of youthful flesh, or the curves of young ankles. So to prevent it they encased her in a garment of rigid black satin, reaching from chin to feet, which were shod in unappetizing laced boots. Even the most nervous mamma could safely take her son with her to the dressmaker's when temptation appeared in such unalluring guise, that is to say, if it could be called temptation at all, for as a guarantee of the respectability of the establishment the director could be relied upon to choose only the plainest of girls to show off his creations.

I shall never forget being taken to see the models at a famous house in Paris and the positive shock I

felt when I saw lovely evening dresses in pale shades of rose and blue being worn by girls whose arms and necks, in dingy black satin, emerged from the low-cut décolletés. I decided that nothing on earth would induce me to show such atrocities.

Slowly the idea of a mannequin parade, which would be as entertaining to watch as a play, took shape in my mind. I would have glorious, goddess-like girls, who would walk to and fro dressed in my models, displaying them to the best advantage to an admiring audience of women. After I had visualized it all, the rest seemed possible. I set about looking for pretty girls, not so easy in those days as it would be now. At the beginning of this century there were outstanding beauties, but the majority of girls, and certainly of working-girls, were not one quarter as good-looking as they are to-day. You might go out into the street then and see not more than four pretty women in a whole morning, whereas now at least one in every ten will have a piquant, pleasing face, and one in every thirty or forty will be really lovely. The general standard in women's looks has improved enormously, which I think supplies one reason why a very beautiful woman does not arouse as much attention to-day as in those days when beautiful women were few and far between.

It was some time before I succeeded in finding my mannequins, six of them, who would be able to do justice to my dresses, and meanwhile I gave my whole attention to preparing the *mise-en-scène* for this first dress parade. I had a soft, rich carpet laid down in the big showroom, and beautiful, grey brocade curtains to tone with it were hung across the windows. At one end of the room I had a stage, a miniature affair, all hung with misty olive chiffon curtains, as the background, which created the atmosphere I wanted.

Then I sent out the invitations on dainty little cards, keeping the illusion that I was inviting my

friends to some afternoon party rather than to a place of business. All my clients were curious to see this new idea of Lucile's and I do not believe there was one refusal. I realized that on this parade of mine I would stand or fall, and as the day drew near I was terribly anxious. Suppose that it should be a failure and I should be exposed to the ridicule of those who were jealous of my success so early in life ! I pictured the unkind witticisms at my expense, and the biting comments on my ambitious scheme. I was little more than a girl then, and like all young people I was really very sensitive under my air of extreme self-possession. However, it was no good worrying, for I had gone too far to draw back, and I summoned up all my courage.

Meanwhile I had found my mannequins.

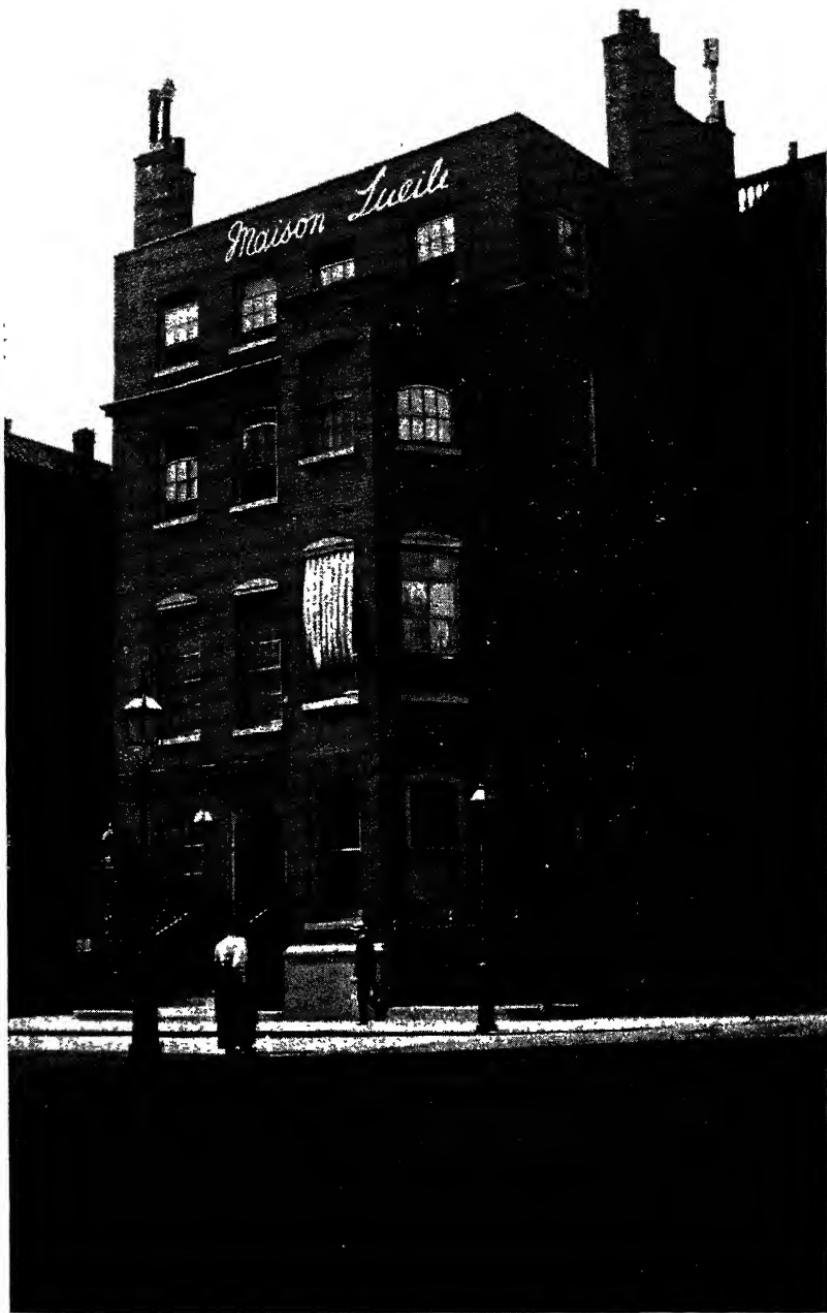
Oh ! the coaching and the anxious thought I gave them. The hair and the hands were soon set right by sending them to my own hairdresser's. That cheered me up, for slowly I saw my chrysalides' wings beginning to appear. Then I set about teaching them to walk as I imagined young goddesses should walk. (The characteristic, languorous, insolent glide of the mannequins of to-day was a later development; I hate it and would never have allowed my girls to adopt it.) I used to make them walk up and down the showroom with books on their heads until they had acquired a perfect poise of head and shoulders. When my six had achieved the art of walking beautifully the battle was won. Feminine psychology did the rest. Is there a woman in the world who will not respond in her own personality to the influence of lovely clothes ? I realized that here was a complete metamorphosis—those six simple young girls had become the incarnation of enchanting womanhood. With amused eyes I watched them develop a hundred little airs and graces, watched them copy the peeresses and famous actresses who came into my salons, until it became

second nature to them to look and behave like women whose existence had been unknown to them a few short weeks before.

No man can possibly realize how women are influenced by the clothes they wear. Put even the plainest woman into a beautiful dress and unconsciously she will try to live up to it. It is as if for her the designer has created a new personality, her every movement reflects an increased self-confidence, a new joy of living. Women can be just as surely starved for want of pretty clothes as they can be for want of food and I would advise many husbands to reflect on this. Even the best of wives and mothers, the most economical housewives, know what it is to long for something beautiful to wear with a positive hunger if it is denied them. Many a rift in the matrimonial lute could be saved with the present of a new dress.

At last the great day of my first parade—the first real mannequin parade ever held—arrived.

The showroom was crowded. Princess Alice, the dearest, most human of all my royal patrons, sat near the front. I think she knew I was nervous, for she gave my hand an affectionate little squeeze, and told me how she was looking forward to seeing the models. Ellen Terry was there, kind and thoughtful, helping late arrivals to find their places; Lily Langtry, so beautiful that she made everyone turn to look at her, as she came in with much more of a regal entry than the several royal ladies who were present. Then there was the Duchess of Westminster and Margot Asquith, young then and rather noisy, but always vivid and amusing, and ever so many more whom I have forgotten. It would be easier, in fact, to say that society was present *en masse*, at least *feminine* society, for as yet no man had even thought of visiting such an entertainment. It was many years afterwards that I had my first male visitor to a dress parade, and he was



17, HANOVER SQUARE
my first big venture where I started "Mannequin" Parades

Mr. Asquith, who had accompanied his wife, so in love with her was he and ready to make her least wish his law. He sat calmly through the show, I remember, though I do not think he gave much attention to the models. But I am digressing.

This first parade of mine, in addition to the mannequins, originated another custom which has been in use ever since—the naming of different models. Before that they were generally referred to as “the pink silk” or “the black velvet”, or even by numbers. It offended my sense of the dramatic that some creation of mine, the expression of a mood, should be spoken of only as “number nine”, or whatever it might be. So I gave them all names and personalities of their own. How they made my audience smile as they were called out one by one. “The Captain with Whiskers”, “When Passion’s Thrall is O’er”, “Give me Your Heart”, “Do You Love Me?” “Gowns of Emotion”, I called them and they caught the fancy of all those women who sat and watched the girls from Balham and Bermondsey showing them how they ought to walk. I shall never forget the long-drawn breath of admiration that rippled round the room as the curtains parted slowly and the first of my glorious girls stepped out on to the stage, pausing to show herself a moment before floating gracefully down the room to a burst of applause.

“Who was she? Where had she come from?” The questions and conjectures flew from one to the other, as the tall figure of this young Diana, five foot eleven of loveliness (it was the day of tall women and gracious curves), crowned with a coronet of golden hair swept along. Her beautiful head was held proud and erect, her dress clung to her long, slender limbs, jewels glittered on her neck and arms, for I had plundered my own jewel case and that of my sister, in order that nothing should be wanting in the picture.

After her followed five others, each, it seemed, lovelier than the last.

There was never such a triumph for me as that wonderful afternoon ! For hours afterwards my head rang with the applause and the showers of congratulations which these women, the richest and the greatest in the country, lavished on me. Orders flowed in by the dozen, so that the saleswomen could hardly cope with them. My star had risen : I knew that from that moment my career as a dressmaker would be smiled upon by fortune. As for my mannequins, they became famous in twenty-four hours. The next day a procession of stage door "johnnies" waited for them to come out. I had to send them sternly away. That audience of women had talked to good purpose. There was not one of those six first mannequins who could not have made a brilliant marriage then and there.

Of course the papers were enthusiastic for the next few days over this novel dress show and I still have boxes of press cuttings praising "Lucile's mysterious beauties" as they called my mannequins, for I, thinking that a little mystery would heighten their attraction, refused to divulge their names or to say where I had found them.

When I arrived in the showroom the morning after the parade I found a group of reporters waiting to interview me. One of them was not a reporter but the sub-editor of the *Royal Magazine* and he told me his name was Rudolf Besier. He seemed very cock-sure, and rather aggressive, but I liked him. I took him round the workrooms and showed him the models. He laughed heartily at the names of some of my "gowns of emotion" and was very sceptical over them. "Just imagine this for a name," he read out, "'The Sighing Sound of Lips Unsatisfied'. How in the world could a dress express that?" I insisted that it could, and told the mannequins to put on the different dresses

whose names were printed on the programme of the previous day's parade. As they came out on to the stage I asked him to guess the name of each dress. Of course he could not. Then a girl walked slowly in wearing a dress of soft grey chiffon veiling an underdress of shot pink and violet taffeta. It looked rather like an opal, and gave the impression of something shadowed and unreal. "Now what does that suggest to you?" I asked him. He laughed. "I should say a young widow or perhaps an old maid, anyway, something unsatisfied."

"That's exactly what I thought of when I called the model 'The Sighing Sound of Lips Unsatisfied,'" I told him. He had to admit there was something to be said for my idea of naming the dresses. He often came to the showrooms after that and even gave me suggestions for other names for dresses. "A Frenzied Song of Amorous Things" was one of them. I never thought he was quite serious about it, but the model sold splendidly and was one of my most successful. Another scarlet dress he christened "Red Mouth of a Venomous Flower"; and to a dinner dress of blue and crystal he gave the name "The Meaning of Life is Clear".

CHAPTER SEVEN

MY wonderful mannequins lacked poise and self-confidence, and their beauty was undiscovered, and therefore to the casual eye practically non-existent. In the evening they took off their splendid clothes, and caught trams and buses to their homes. There they cooked the family supper, did their own washing and performed a hundred and one prosaic tasks.

But in the atmosphere of the showroom, wearing beautiful clothes all day, and surrounded with beautiful things they took on new personalities. Inspired themselves by the discovery of their own loveliness, and the sense of power it awakened in them, they became in turn my inspiration.

The models we sent out from Hanover Square to clothe some of the most beautiful women in the world owed their origin as much to these girls, who a few months ago had never known what it was to wear a dress which had cost more than a guinea, as they did to me.

It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of environment on a woman, for women are infinitely more adaptable than men, they become a part of their surroundings. I see every day in the streets and in tube stations girls who are fairy princesses in disguise, girls whom nobody takes much notice of as they travel back from the City with tired faces, and lagging feet, yet I know that I could turn them into dazzling beauties with one wave of the magic wand I used to wield. "I love that beauty should go beautifully", and I am so sorry sometimes when I see a lovely girl without the background that is her birthright, that I long to give

it to her. There is not a woman living whose looks do not need care and attention, and even "the face that launched a thousand ships" would not have been seen to its best advantage under a cheap hat to-day.

It was easy enough for me once I had chosen my mannequins to make them a part of their surroundings, for they were just as enthusiastic about the work as I was. Often I would shut myself up for hours with one of these glorious girls, and a few yards of material, which I had already visioned as the dress her type of beauty seemed to demand, and neither of us would speak a word except for a few curt directions until it was finished. Stopping only long enough for us both to drink a glass of milk, we would work the whole day, I pinning and unpinning the material, she turning and moving this way and that until I had got the effect I wanted. At the end of it all we would be tired out, but when, a few days later, she would wear the model in the parade, we would both feel more than repaid by the chorus of admiration which greeted her entrance.

In these days a mannequin is so much an accepted fact at any fashionable dressmaker's that we are apt to take her for granted. The slender figure gliding in and out of the room in first one dress, then another, pausing to answer questions about the model she is in an expressionless voice, has become so familiar that her presence is scarcely noticed, except as a means for displaying the gown. But at the time when I first launched my "goddesses", they were the talk of London. Women came as much out of curiosity to see them as out of a wish to buy the clothes I was creating. Within the first six months of starting the parades I had doubled my clientele, and nearly trebled my turnover. You see, I knew the value of a picture to women, the subtle allure of atmosphere.

Women who would gaze unmoved at my loveliest model when it was offered for their inspection in the cold,

grey light of a winter morning would come back in the afternoon, when a parade was in progress, see it worn by Gamela or Hebe, and buy it immediately. All women make pictures for themselves, they go to the theatre and see themselves as the heroine of the play, they watch Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo acting for them at the cinema, but it is themselves they are watching really, and when the lights are lowered to a rosy glow, and soft music is played and the mannequins parade, there is not a woman in the audience, though she may be fat and middle-aged, who is not seeing herself looking as those slim, beautiful girls look in the clothes they are offering her. And that is the inevitable prelude to buying the clothes.

Very soon I had increased the number of my mannequins, and their fame had spread to such an extent that when it became known I was looking for more girls I had over two hundred applicants to choose from.

I gave each one of my mannequins a name in harmony with her personality. There was lovely Gamela, "Black Beauty" in Arabic. I called her that. Her real name was Susie ; it was hopelessly incongruous for her six foot one of perfect symmetry. Her blue-black hair coiled round her ears in two plaits (Gamela was the originator of what was called "the telephone coil" hairdressing), her long, almond-shaped eyes and straight-cut, cameo-like features suggested a priestess of Isis, far back in Egypt. She was the ideal exponent of the exotic, Oriental evening gowns which I made so popular before the War, and she wore them as though she had been born to the inheritance of riches and power. As she walked down the room, her proud little head held erect, her strange, mysterious eyes half closed, she made most of the women who watched her look insignificant.

Then there was Dolores, another "goddess", a

statuesque six foot beauty, with a Grecian profile and such lovely limbs that Florenz Ziegfeld, that world's judge of women, came by chance to one of my parades in New York, begged me on the spot to release her, and took her for his Follies. For a while she had a triumphant career as "the most beautiful girl in the States", her face was embossed on the American war coins, then she married Mr. Tudor Wilkinson, millionaire and art-collector, who took her to live in his wonderful *appartement* in Paris on the Quai d'Orleans.

"Phyllis" was a chubby, baby-faced type, with a rosebud mouth. She looked so feminine and helpless that any man who saw her felt he simply had to protect her from the cruel world. Mr. Jesse Franks, who was called "The Wall Street Wizard", felt it so ardently when he met her on the boat going out with me to New York that he persuaded her to marry him, and I lost one of my best mannequins. Now Phyllis is one of the richest women in London.

"Florence", who had a skin like a flower and beautiful hands and tiny feet, married into one of the oldest families in Scotland, and was presented at Court.

"Hebe", loveliest of them all, became a legend in Paris and had so many suitors that she could have married a dozen times over. Hebe was dark and voluptuous, and very demure and sphinx-like, with her quiet, downcast eyes and oval face. Her father was a teacher of French at Greenwich, and she had intended to follow in his footsteps. Then someone told her that I wanted a mannequin who could speak French to take over to Paris with me, and she came to the showrooms to apply for the post. She got it and went with me not only to Paris, where her beauty caused a sensation, but to America. Then she married Mr. Arthur Kingsland, the multi-millionaire, and went to live in his château outside Pau.

These were the girls, who might, in the ordinary

course of events, have had lives of obscurity. Swept along on the tide of triumph created by those first mannequin parades of mine they became world-famous. In London, in Paris, in New York and in Chicago they had some of the richest men of the day at their feet. They stood for beauty incarnate, suitors clamoured for their favours. When they walked in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées or lunched at Voison's, they were surrounded by a crowd of admirers, who hovered at a respectable distance. There was nothing that they might not have asked from men, so great was the power of the legend they had become.

"Be sure of what you want," I used to tell them. "If you want to marry be as good as gold. If you don't, be expensive."

I used to tell them I liked travelling with them, for their beauty was an "Open Sesame" to all doors. The susceptible Frenchmen at the Douane never even examined our luggage, they looked at Hebe's face instead and passed us through, and in the restaurants waiters used to hover obsequiously round our table. I think they would have chosen one of the rare smiles that Dolores used to dispense rather than the most generous tip. They used to bring the best of everything that was on the menu for us.

Incidentally the slimming craze had not been brought in at that time, and it amuses me to think of how different the figures of my goddesses were from the accepted standard of beauty to-day. Not one of them weighed much under eleven stone, and several of them were considerably more. They were "big girls" with "fine figures", a compliment then, though it has become the reverse now. The post-war ideal of the "boyish" figure was then unheard of, and a woman was admired for looking like a woman, a thing of generous curves and a full bust.

Only the other day I came across one of the

programmes of a mannequin parade I gave twenty-seven years ago. It was called "A Private Exhibition of Studies in Costume, Examples of the Possibilities of Dress." Attached to the programme is a slip, "H.R.H. The Duchess of Connaught has graciously extended her patronage to the private view and has authorized us to state that the trousseau of H.R.H. The Princess Margaret of Connaught is being supplied by the Maison Lucile."

I remember that parade because it was divided into a cycle—"The Seven Ages of Woman." It began with models for "The Schoolgirl", went on to "The Debutante", "The Fiancée", "The Bride", "The Wife" (in this group were nine of my emotional gowns, one of which was called "Ask Nothing More", another title chosen by Rudolf Besier). Then came "The Hostess", and finally "The Dowager".

In addition to the dresses themselves I used to show hats, shoes and gloves to harmonize with them, and even jewels. In fact everything to give the wearer the personality I had pictured when I designed the model.

As I had been the first dressmaker to introduce the mannequin, so I was the first to show women how they ought to wear their dresses. I taught them to let their clothes express their own personality. I would never design a dress for any woman until I had studied her type, and more often than not I had to find for her an entirely different way of dressing and of doing her hair.

So I began to be noted for "making personalities", and the new rich used to come secretly to me to be coached, not only in the art of dressing, but in the art of wearing beautiful clothes, which was far more important for them to acquire. So great was their faith in me that they used to pay twenty guineas for a consultation, otherwise I should not have had the time to devote to them, for every minute of my day was

booked up weeks ahead. In America years later I used to be paid five and six times that sum by the wives of self-made men who had acquired money, and who felt incapable of taking any place in society until they had been drilled.

With all these women I knew that there was only one thing to do, and that was to find them one special "genre", which they could keep to in their dress and everything with which they surrounded themselves. They used to put themselves in my hands absolutely and carry out my instructions, and I seldom had a failure.

Those were the days when every woman wanted to look individual and unlike everyone else. Dressing since the War has been almost communal in its tendencies. For many years we wore our skirts at exactly the same length regardless of the shape of our legs, drew our little hats over our faces at precisely the same angle, and adorned ourselves, whether we were fat or slim, with the same jumper. So we all looked alike.

Now the pendulum is gradually beginning to swing back and we are striving to bring more personality into our clothes. But I do not think that dressing will ever again play the part in social life that it played twenty or thirty years ago. It is regarded as of infinitely less importance nowadays. The cult of beauty has increased and the present generation of girls are far more *soignée* and far better groomed than their mothers were, but they think less of clothes than their predecessors did. Very few women would bother now to change their dresses five or six times a day, yet every Edwardian, with any claims to being well-dressed, did so as a matter of course.

Nobody minds now being seen in the same dress time after time, yet twenty years ago to have worn the same dress at three functions in a season caused comment. Lack of time and lack of money has revo-

lutionized modern dress, for both were essential to the old standard.

No woman could possibly keep up the type of dressing which prevailed at the beginning of this century unless she had a maid, or even two maids, as most of my clients in the old days had. The people who can afford a large staff are in the minority now and so many women are working for at least part of the day, and have not time to take off their clothes—hence the era of “practical dressing”, of ready-made clothes, semi-sports wear even for Town, and little hats which can go under umbrellas. It is all very sensible, of course, yet those of us who can remember those spacious, leisurely days, and the “picture dresses” that represented them, cannot help regretting the change, inevitable as it is.

The women who used to come to my showrooms, spend a whole day choosing clothes, and order filmy nightdresses at ten and twelve guineas each by the dozen, the women who would never cover an evening dress with anything less than sable or ermine, and who would have been horrified at the mere suggestion of imitation lace, are all part of a London which is disappearing. It is many years since I have seen a woman look really “elegant”, the old-fashioned adjective has fallen into disuse. It is as out of place as the clothes it described would be to-day.

I can remember some of those women who made an art of beautiful dressing. The late Countess of Dudley was one of them. I can see her now, walking slowly and with that very graceful gait of hers into my showroom, her dress of mauve chiffon falling in a cloud of draperies to her little feet, her big hat, with its sweeping feathers, setting off her classical profile. In one hand she usually carried a single, long-stemmed rose, an affectation perhaps, but it suited her. Her jewels were wonderful. Those were the days when

women wore a great deal of jewellery, and what would now be called ostentatious was then thought only fitting to the wearer's social position.

The first thing a man did when he got engaged was to go through the family jewel case to find something worthy of his bride, and if he were unable to do this he was expected to go straight to Cartier's and buy not only the engagement ring, but an assortment of brooches, bracelets and necklaces.

Young men were expected to be very attentive to their fiancées in those days, and I think the engaged girl got much more fun out of her engagement than her successor of to-day does.

I used to see so many romances from their beginning, for my showroom was a favourite meeting-place for lovers, particularly if the parents did not approve. It was so entirely blameless an excuse for the girl to say that she was going to her dressmaker that nobody even wondered at her frequent visits there. I could pick out at least half a dozen of the most happily married couples in society whose engagements began in a clandestine way, but who were able, sometimes with my help, to overcome parental prejudice. I had been in their confidence from the start, for women confide in their dressmakers. There are more secrets told in fitting-rooms and in hairdressers' cubicles than anywhere in the world, for all women have to confide in somebody, and it has to be somebody impersonal. They will only give carefully chosen confidences to their dearest friends. Their dressmaker or manicurist is told the unvarnished truth.

Women have made the most surprising confessions to me. They have told me the most intimate details of their lives, who their lovers were, and the causes of their quarrels with their husbands. One of the strangest stories of all was told me by a lady. Both she and her husband passionately desired an heir to

the estates, but it was found impossible for him to have, and there was apparently no alternative to the prospect of the succession passing to a very distant relative. Eventually her husband came to her and implored her to be unfaithful to him, only stipulating that she should not take as her lover any man of his acquaintance. So this woman, brought up in the traditional purity of a great family which had prided itself on its observance of the virtues, felt herself constrained to make what she considered an appalling sacrifice for the honour of the house she had married into. After weeks of deliberation she screwed up her courage to the point of going out on to Piccadilly one night, determined to spend the night with a man whose only qualifications were to be that he looked young and healthy. She cried bitterly as she described the adventure to me.

"I did not know what to say," she explained to me. "But I just smiled when a man said, 'Hullo,' and let him do the talking. But when he asked me where to go, I didn't know what he meant, and I had to admit that I did not know of any place. After that he would not go with me. He seemed to be afraid."

So she had gone home too distressed to continue the adventure. She had no better fortune on the second night, but on the third, she told me, she had found "a nice, young boy", on a holiday in London. They went away for a week-end— Her son is the present owner of the estates.

The sequel to the story is the most surprising part of it, for the husband she had honestly wanted to please never forgave her for carrying out his wishes so literally. Although there was no open estrangement between them, a quarrel began, which lasted until his death. It was a terrible grief to her, for she had only done what she had believed to be an entirely disagreeable duty rather than let the great estates, of which her

husband was so proud, pass into the keeping of a stranger.

“The boy” used to write to her at a Poste Restante in another name. He, of course, knew nothing of her beyond the fact that she was a pretty little woman whom he had found on Piccadilly. He was very disappointed when she refused to see him on his next visit to London.

Most of the confidences which were related to me came from women who wanted their accounts faked because of their husbands. The wives of notoriously mean men would often ask that only half the price of the dresses should be put down on their accounts and sent in to their husbands. The other half they used to raise from the household expenses, or in some other way.

Then there were the women who asked just the opposite, and insisted on another twenty or thirty per cent being added to all the items on their bills. They were married to men who, although they would pay out large sums to have their wives well dressed, were niggardly in the matter of pin money, and so the wives had to resort to the subterfuge of having extra money paid out on their bills, which was handed over to them so that they might have a little ready money. This was a very common state of things, and I used to be surprised at the numbers of rich men whose wives, although they might make other women envious because of their sable coats and beautiful jewels, had literally not five shillings in their jewelled bags.

Then came the confidences of the women whose bills were mysteriously paid by “somebody”—“an old friend”. We used to be asked “to send in my account to Lord . . . and please do not mention it to my husband.”

Sometimes this was the prelude to a divorce. I particularly remember one case. The woman was young and very charming, married to a rich husband.

Her dress bills extended over a period of something like three years, for those were the days of long credit, but as she would constantly pay a small sum on account all went smoothly, until it was announced that her husband would not be responsible for her bills. At that time she owed "Lucile Ltd." over £2,000, and we were obliged to threaten the husband with legal proceedings. Eventually, after my solicitor had consulted with the husband's solicitors, it was agreed that the wife's bill would be paid after details had been furnished.

I had, of course, nothing whatever to do with anything but the designing of the models, but the counting-house staff were given instructions to go over the account, deduct payments already made and send the whole particulars to the husband.

It was not until months afterwards that my solicitor told me that the bill had been the cause of one of the most talked-of divorces of that time. The husband had gone into his wife's account thoroughly and had seen that various payments had been made. He had insisted on particulars being supplied him from the accountants, and had discovered that one of his best friends had been in the habit of paying for his wife's clothes. Without letting her know of his discovery he had her watched, and the result was that some months later he was able to divorce her. I was sorry for her for she had been very unhappy with him, and I was glad to hear some time afterwards that she had married the co-respondent, who had been in love with her for years.

Some of the most amusing confidences came from actresses and "professional beauties", who would bring their men friends to "look at" clothes. The "looking" always ended in a present of a dress or hat or a fur coat, according to the degree of infatuation on the part of the man.

I remember one very famous actress who brought a Maharajah shopping with her, and asked the saleswoman to show them furs. She selected a sable coat costing nearly three thousand pounds, but said she could not afford it. The Maharajah gallantly came to the rescue, and although she demurred for about five minutes, in the end the coat was bought and the saleswoman was asked to send it round to the Maharajah's hotel, where it would be paid for.

It was sent the next morning, but the messenger came back with it. The Eastern potentate had quarrelled with his love and withdrawn the present.

Later in the day the Maharajah came in again with another lady. He ordered the same coat should be shown to her, and as she was delighted with it paid for it on the spot, and she left the shop wearing it.

In less than five minutes after that the actress arrived and asked to see the coat again. The saleswoman, who was very embarrassed at this contretemps, was obliged to say that there had been some mistake and the coat had been sold to another client. The actress, evidently guessing what had happened, possibly because she had seen her former admirer leaving the house with another woman, stormed with rage and rushed out saying that she meant to get the coat back at all costs.

The Maharajah was leaving for Paris that night, and was actually on the platform at Victoria Station when she found him. They had a terrific quarrel, for the other woman had come to see him off wearing the coat.

Eventually the actress won, and she and the Maharajah, who had by this time missed his train, had an equally violent reconciliation, and drove off together.

A week or two later she came back to the showroom with him to choose a dress to go under the coat !

CHAPTER EIGHT

I USED to love the dresses I created, very much as a mother loves her child, or an artist his pictures. For me there was a positive intoxication in taking yards of shimmering silks, laces airy as gossamer and lengths of ribbons, delicate and rainbow-coloured, and fashioning of them garments so lovely that they might have been worn by some princess in a fairy-tale. I have known much happiness in my life and much sorrow, for that matter, as every human being does who is resolved to live each moment to its fullest extent as it comes, taking the bitter with the sweet and not shirking any emotion. This has always seemed to me the only way to live, and if I have a philosophy in life this sums it up.

But I have never found in any person or any thing that lasting satisfaction that my work has given me. I have found happiness in friendships, in travel and in many other things, but none of them has remained with me as my work has done. Just as when I was a child I used to dress up my dolls to console myself when my grandmother had been especially difficult, so in later years I used to create a dream world for myself by making dresses that expressed my own moods.

I remember some of these "emotional dresses" now. One of them called "Consolable Sorrow" I designed just after a young man whom I liked had left for America. It was in deepest black, and became the most popular model for a widow that I ever showed. Every woman in London who lost her husband went into "Consolable Sorrow", and I must say they looked

sweetly pathetic. Then there were gay little dresses emanating from happy love affairs that breathed romance and *joie de vivre*. One of them was actually the cause of one of the most talked-of engagements of the day. It happened like this.

I had designed the dresses for *The Catch of the Season*, which, with Seymour Hicks and Zena Dare in the cast, was to take London by storm, and incidentally bring me in so many orders for dresses like those worn in the play that we could scarcely cope with them. A few days before the opening night we decided to hold a parade of the costumes at Hanover Square, and invitations were sent out. I have one of those invitations to this day, and it amuses me to read on the back of it, "Lucile believes that gowns may express ideas from grave to gay, even emotions and passions. So she has gone to the silent worlds of desires and temperaments and sensations and translates their secrets into wondrous colours and entrancing forms." I think that the publicity agent for the Vaudeville Theatre must have been worth his money !

Among the people who came to see this dress parade was the Countess of Somers, the mother of Adeline Duchess of Bedford, and one of the most charming and fascinating old ladies I have ever known. There was something so kindly and gracious in her personality that everyone who came in contact with her loved her. To her relations she was a veritable fairy godmother, and she loved young people, and had a genius for understanding them.

After the dress parade she told me that she had a great-niece coming out—little Verena Somers-Cox. She was going to stay with the Earl and Countess of Dudley, and would make her first appearance at Dublin, where Lord Dudley was then Viceroy. Would I make her some really beautiful dresses, as it was so

important that she should make a good impression? I said that I must see her before I could give any opinion, and the next day Lady Somers brought her in.

I never designed a dress for any woman in those days until I had succeeded, as I believed, in placing her type, for dresses, if they are to give any pleasure to their wearer, must become a part of her personality. It is obvious, for instance, that it is no use to create exotic gowns for the sports-loving type of woman, or to dress the *ingénue* in garments designed for the *vamp*, for to do so is to graft on to her something which does not harmonize with her own personality, and she will never feel her best thus. As a general rule when I had a new client I used to lunch or dine with her, or even stay in her house for a few days while I made my observations carefully and noted her good and bad points, what to accentuate and what to conceal, and by the end of the visit I had decided just what clothes would suit her.

With this young girl, however, I had not much time, for she was leaving for Ireland in a few weeks, so I had to find something for her at once. I looked at her carefully as she walked in shyly, in the wake of Lady Somers, and saw that she was not then a beauty, although she might develop into one later. At the same time she had the incomparable charms of youth and innocence, and it was for me to make the most of them. Suddenly I thought of the demure little dress I had designed for Zena Dare to wear as the *ingénue* in *The Catch of the Season*. It was the sweetest thing in pale grey, with a neat little muslin collar and wide blue sash, just exactly what I wanted for this shy young girl of sixteen, with her rose-leaf skin and childish contours. Lady Somers was delighted with the idea, but she found the price more than she had wished to pay.

"Never mind, she will get a rich husband in it," I said: we both laughed.

Yet that was just what happened.

Little Verena wore the dress the morning after her arrival and came down to breakfast in it. Seated at the table was Lord Hyde, the most eligible bachelor in London, rich, good-looking, and heir to his father, the Earl of Clarendon. For years he had been the quarry of every matchmaking mother in Society, but although there had been rumours of first one engagement and then another, he had remained heart-whole. That is until he looked up on that summer morning and saw a little vision in palest grey standing wide-eyed and shy just inside the door, for from that moment his fate was sealed. It was a case of love at first sight, and although she was still almost a child, and he many years her senior, he proposed to her within a week of their meeting. The *Catch of the Season* dress had brought in the "catch of the season" in husbands!

I made the trousseau for their wedding and continued to design her dresses for years afterwards when she became Countess of Clarendon, but she always told me that no dress had ever given her quite so much pleasure as the grey silk I made for her to take to Ireland.

Somehow or other the story got round after that that I was "lucky" to debutantes, and there was scarcely a fashionable mother in Town who did not bring her daughter to me to be dressed for her first season, and, of course, as many of them were lovely girls not a few engagements resulted. Before long I was running a special department for debutantes' dresses, and our house was the first in London or even in Paris to do so, for as a general rule the fashions were created for older women, and were only adapted for the *jeune fille*, often very unsuitably at that.

One great difference I notice in these days is that

there are fewer first season engagements, perhaps because the modern girl has learnt to appreciate the freedom she has in this century and is in no hurry to exchange it for marriage. Before the War a debutante was expected to annex an eligible young man, if not in her first, at least in her second season. Her mother entertained lavishly for her, whether the family bank balance justified it or not, gave balls for her, whose cost ran into hundreds of pounds, and spent a small fortune on her clothes. In her third season, if she still remained unattached, alarm took the place of maternal pride and efforts were redoubled.

If even these were unsuccessful she was generally sent out to India or Egypt to some relative or other, where she often saved the stigma on her family at the eleventh hour by marrying some young officer with not too brilliant prospects. If she failed even to do this she came home again, but in what altered status. Instead of being the adored debutante daughter she was tacitly consigned to old maidism, while younger sisters, who had just come out, took the centre of the stage. No more balls for her, she was generally looked on as the family Cinderella, and her dress allowance was generally cut down to a minimum, now that pretty clothes were no longer regarded as necessary weapons in her social armoury.

I have been witness to some distressing scenes when mothers have actually reproached their daughters in my presence with not justifying all that had been done for them, and the money that had been laid out in the hope of a rich return ! But all that has changed immeasurably, and some of the happiest marriages are made now by girls who have been "out" for several years.

The modern girl has, I think, learnt to look life in the face. She is not afraid of being left unmarried, because marriage is no longer vitally necessary to her

happiness. So many things are possible to her that were denied to her mother's generation of girls, and she has learnt how to make the most of them. Perhaps she has not the restraint that we, her elders, think she ought to have, but then very few young people have restraint—it is one of the things that the years teach us.

Fundamentally I believe that the cocktail-drinking, cigarette-smoking girls of to-day are no better and no worse than the demure little creatures who used to accompany their mothers to my salons in Hanover Square to choose their presentation dresses. The confidences which my grand-daughter, Flavia Giffard, and her friends tell me have not changed much from those which were poured into my sympathetic ears twenty or thirty years ago by their predecessors. But I do think that on the whole the young girl of to-day has an infinitely better time in many ways. I can recall countless instances of girls who were literally forced into marriages with men whom they actually disliked because they had been chosen as suitable husbands for them by their families. Often the parents must have known that such a marriage could have no possible chance of happiness, but it made no difference. Provided that the prospective bridegroom was eligible as regards income and social position the rest was left to take care of itself. He might be thirty or forty years older than the bride, and have lived a notoriously fast life, he might be a semi-cripple or tainted with hereditary insanity, but any of these drawbacks were overlooked as if they did not exist.

I shall never forget one wedding for which I designed the bride's and bridesmaids' dresses. It was one of the smartest weddings of the year, and the newspapers were full of the beauty of the bride, who was scarcely out of her teens, and the wealth of the bridegroom. It was described as such marriages usually are as a

"case of true love", and "a perfect romance". Only those who knew the whole story and were aware that the bride's parents were deeply in debt to their future son-in-law knew that there was neither love nor romance in it. I was struck, when I designed the dresses, by the listlessness of the girl and by her utter lack of interest in the whole proceedings, and I was not surprised when one of the fitters, who had been listening to the gossip of her maid, told me that she was desperately in love with a young Guardsman, who had been forbidden the house by her father. I was terribly sorry for her, but of course I could do nothing, and the wedding order went through as usual.

I went to the reception afterwards and I thought that the bride looked more like an ivory statuette in the clinging dress of white satin I had created for her than a living woman, as she stood by her middle-aged bridegroom. When she went upstairs to change into her going-away dress I followed with her mother, and we began to help her to take off her wreath and veil. Suddenly she turned on her mother and all the misery and bitterness which must have been stored up in her heart for weeks was poured out in a flood of reproaches. She tore the wedding veil, a priceless piece of old family lace, in two with her trembling hands and threw it on the floor, as she accused her mother of ruining her whole life for her own ambition.

"You have married me to a man I loathe and I shall loathe him to my dying day," she said. "Every hour that I spend with him will be an hour of misery."

With a voice almost choked with sobs she solemnly cursed her mother, who stood helplessly by crying, apparently realizing for the first time the wrong she had done her daughter. Downstairs the bridegroom was ready waiting to start for the Continental train they were to catch, and the bridesmaids hovered

wretchedly at the door. The mother was too overcome to do anything and finally I and the governess, the latter with tears pouring down her face, for she had been with the family for years and shared its troubles, persuaded the poor little bride to put on her going-away dress and go downstairs. I shall always remember her set face as she went and the cold, trembling little hand which was put into mine when she said "Good-bye". She has been married for years now and takes an active part in all the different charity affairs, but remembering those terrible things she poured out on her wedding-day I have often wondered whether she is happy.

If the *Catch of the Season* was the favourite of the ingénue dresses I created, I must find its parallel in popularity among the more sophisticated models. Looking back I cannot recall any dress which made such a sensation as "The Birth of Venus", an evening dress in a glorious pink and silver brocade. The inspiration for this dress came to me just before the War, and I remember that I shut myself up for the whole of one day while I thought it out. The mannequin on whom I created it was one of the most beautiful creatures I have ever seen. She was quite as interested in it as I was and stood for hours without the least sign of fatigue while I draped the wonderful material on her until I had got it to my complete satisfaction.

When it was done I looked at her standing tall and lovely (she was just under six foot and had quantities of golden hair coiled round her head), and the name of the dress came to me like a flash, "The Birth of Venus" . . . reincarnation of a deity. It was made for two women only, both worthy of its beauty. One was the Queen of Spain, the other Mrs. Dudley Ward. The latter was the first to buy it. She came to me one day, excited and happy. She had been invited to dine

for the first time with the Prince of Wales and wanted a dress worthy of the occasion.

"You must make me the most beautiful dress in London."

I thought of the "Birth of Venus", and had it shown to her, and without waiting to see any others she decided to have it made for her. The girls worked day and night to have it ready in time for her, but it was well worth the time and trouble spent on it. When I went into the showroom to see the final fitting I thought that I had never seen a more perfect alliance of beauty than this glorious dress, displayed by a woman whose every movement was a joy to watch. I have always thought Mrs. Dudley Ward one of the most graceful and the most distinguished-looking woman I have ever seen, and it was a real pleasure to dress her for she always did justice to my models.

She wore this particular dress with more success than any other I ever made her, and the Prince of Wales was charmed with it and told her he had never seen anything so beautiful.

A few days later the Queen of Spain came into the salon. She always bought her dresses from me whenever she came to London and used to go back with a trunk full of lovely clothes. "Far too nice to be wasted on Madrid, where they think that a black mantilla is enough for any woman," as she once said to me.

Of all my Royal clients I liked her the most, for she was so delightfully human and simple, and so truly feminine in the way she enjoyed choosing her clothes, sometimes spending a whole afternoon in the showroom, insisting on being served just like anyone else, laughing and talking with the mannequins and saleswomen and trying on the dresses in the little fitting-rooms until she found one that suited her. She has the most perfect taste in clothes and invariably

knew what was the best type of model for her and insisted on having it. Of all the women I know I can think of none who possesses the "clothes sense" to a greater degree than the Queen of Spain. Had she been born in another position she would have made a fortune as a *grande couturière*, I believe, for she understands the art of dressing not only for herself but for other people.

As an instance of this a saleswoman once told me that on one occasion the Queen of Spain had come to Hanover Square when I was out and had been shown a number of models. Sitting opposite to her in the salon was an enormously stout woman of the new-rich type, who was trying to select an evening dress for herself. Of course when the mannequins had paraded before her she picked out the most unsuitable model for her figure of all of them. (I have noticed that very stout women seem to have a positive genius for choosing the wrong dress.) The saleswoman attempted gently to turn her attention to something she would look better in without much success, and in the end the poor soul got hopelessly confused. The Queen of Spain, who had been watching the little byplay, turned to the saleswoman.

"Look, this is the sort of line she ought to choose," she whispered and quickly made a rough sketch of it on the back of an envelope she took out of her bag. It was exactly right, I could not have created a better model myself; and the saleswoman, seeing its possibilities, persuaded the stout lady to have one made after the rough sketch. She did so and was delighted with it. Had she known that it had been designed for her by the Queen of Spain I feel sure she would have valued it far more.

The Queen did a great deal to bring the fashions of the Spanish Court into line with those of London and Paris, but she was up against old prejudices and

was continually hampered by the rigid traditions which opposed any really smart fashions.

"I love this model, but I simply dare not buy it," she would often say. "You cannot imagine what a scandal it would cause if I appeared in it at the palace." So it would have to be modified in some way or other, to our mutual regret. One thing the Queen absolutely refused to do was to wear the voluminous petticoats considered necessary to conform with Spanish etiquette, so most of her skirts, although they would have been perfectly suitable even at Buckingham Palace (my most jealous rivals never brought against me the charge that my models were anything but good style), had to be made of thicker material than the original model.

King Alphonso often accompanied the Queen to a fitting and took nearly as much interest in it as she did ; like many husbands he was very fond of helping his wife to choose her new dresses, and she evidently valued his judgment, for she always decided on the model he picked out for her from the collection. Once I remember I had words with him on the subject of a dress—that is if anyone could be said to "have words" with King Alphonso, who is the soul of good-nature and kindness. It was over the battle of the Queen's skirts. She had chosen a model, which had a slit at one side so that as the wearer walked the drapery opened to give just the most fleeting glimpse of the legs. The Queen loved it and said so at once, and I, knowing how well it would suit her, began arranging the details immediately. Then King Alphonso put his foot down.

"I am sorry, my dear," he said, "but you cannot possibly wear that skirt. Not in Spain."

The Queen was dreadfully disappointed, and I began to argue with him. Not for anything in the world would I alter and spoil this model, I said.

"Then I am afraid the Queen cannot have it," he replied. "You would not like to make trouble for me, I am sure, Lady Duff Gordon," he added. "Probably my attitude over so apparently trivial a thing seems to you most unreasonable, but I can assure you that to cause offence as the Queen would do inevitably in wearing that dress might have far from trivial results."

Of course I gave in, and finally we arrived at a happy compromise. The dress opened like the original model, but only to show a lovely cascade of lace underskirt. It really was very pretty and the Queen wrote saying that it had been much admired in Spain. One thing that I always found very charming about that royal couple was their great affection for each other. They seemed ideally suited in temperament, and after many years of marriage King Alphonso was still in love with his wife. He would often slip his arm through hers in the showroom, and one of the saleswomen told me that on one occasion, when the Queen was trying on a dress, King Alphonso impulsively kissed her.

"You looked so sweet in it, I could not help it," was his answer, when the Queen reproached him for taking all the powder off her nose !

"I never thought kings were as romantic as that," was the saleswoman's comment to me afterwards. "The Queen of Spain is lucky."

As events have turned out I suppose she has been the reverse of "lucky" in one sense, for she has lost her throne, and for all their simplicity and dislike of formalities in their everyday life both she and King Alphonso were Royal in every thought and deed. But, as women count these things, I think that she has been lucky at least in love, which is perhaps the most important thing of all, and I am sure that in their exile she and her husband are getting the most out of life, helped by their affection and understanding of one

another, and by the sense of humour they have both been endowed with.

I had always pictured Mrs. Pankhurst as a big, strong, aggressive, dictatorial woman. My meeting with her took place before the War at the height of her fame as a fighting Suffragette.

Lady Cowdry of Dun Edit Castle had summoned all her friends and neighbours for miles around to come and hear Mrs. Pankhurst, who was her guest at that time, speak on the subject of "Suffragettes". I had always thought of the movement as a huge joke and was delighted to have an opportunity of hearing the most powerful and militant of its supporters explaining her views to the "unbelievers".

I arrived a little late and found everybody assembled in the immense dining-room, scrambling for food of the "high tea" sort, most of them having come a good way to hear Mrs. Pankhurst. I did not want any tea and the huge hall adjoining the dining-room looked far more inviting with its bright log fire, soft and comfortable sofas and deep armchairs, so I slipped out there to await the end of tea, when Mrs. Pankhurst was to make her address.

I was quite alone in the hall when from somewhere, I never knew where, a dear little woman appeared, very simply dressed, and sat down beside me. She asked me if I were interested in the Suffragette movement. I told her I was certainly interested but did not approve of it. I thought it was a lot of nonsense and rather undignified. In fact, I was far from encouraging. My unknown companion asked me if I had considered what it meant to women and to England and began talking quietly but decisively in her gentle voice until I was almost convinced of the right and glory of women's suffrage.

I told her I had come a long way to hear Mrs. Pankhurst, whom I imagined to be a powerful,

masculine type of woman. I am afraid I grew almost abusive as I enlarged on my mental picture of her.

The gentle little woman beside me smiled and said: "I am Mrs. Pankhurst!"

After this embarrassing introduction we became quite friendly, and I later met and made friends with Sylvia and Christabel—but they never made me a Suffragette!

CHAPTER NINE

I SUPPOSE every woman remembers some years in her life which stood out more vividly than any others, generally because they were especially happy ones. The summer of 1907 is a time I like to look back on. That season was a very brilliant one, perhaps the most brilliant of the series which brought the social life of pre-War London to its peak. And just when it was at its zenith a new play was launched with a new actress, who set the whole Town raving over her beauty, and a waltz song which set the whole world dancing to its fascinating lilt.

The triumph of *The Merry Widow* was also a personal triumph for me, for of all the plays I dressed, and they were many, it was my favourite. "The Merry Widow" hat, which I designed for Lily Elsie, brought in a fashion which carried the name of "Lucile", its creator, all over Europe and the States. Every woman, who wanted to be in the swim, had to have a "Merry Widow" hat, and we made thousands of pounds through the craze, which lasted longer than most fashion crazes, for the charm of the play kept it alive.

I shall never forget the day when George Edwardes brought in Lily Elsie to see me for the first time. But she was a very different Lily Elsie from the glorious creature whose beauty was to be the talk of every club in London. The girl who came in with George Edwardes was trembling with nervousness as she moved across the room. I had to look again to discover that her hair was a wonderful shade of gold, and that her skin, which was innocent of make-up, was of the real lilies and roses type.

George Edwardes drew me aside, and explained that this was the new girl whom he was putting into the principal part in *The Merry Widow*, and that he wanted me to design the dresses for the production, and particularly for her.

"She has never done anything to speak of," he said, "but I know she is clever, and I believe she has a great future in front of her. I have the idea that she can play the part of Sonia and astonish them all. Now this is where you can help me enormously. You must give her a personality, and coach her so that she can keep it up."

I promised to do my best, and I started right away by asking her to take off her dress and hat and making her stand in front of me in her satin slip, while I made a mental picture of her. I discovered first that she had beautiful lines, then that her head was perfectly poised, and thirdly that she had the gift of standing absolutely still for as long as one wanted her to stand.

It was a great help to me, for I was able to teach her how to walk and how to move. There was not a movement across the stage, not a single gesture of her part in *The Merry Widow* that we did not go through together, and I realized that here was a girl who had both beauty and intelligence, but who had never learnt how to make the best of herself. So shy and diffident was she in those days that a less astute producer than George Edwardes would in all probability have passed her over and left her in the chorus, while he promoted to stardom some girl without a tenth part of her gifts.

One of the first things I did for Lily Elsie was to make her alter the style of her hairdressing, and after one or two experiments to see what suited her, I evolved the fashion of coiling it neatly and flat to that beautifully shaped little head of hers. The result was a complete change in her appearance, and George Edwardes was as delighted with the result as she was.



With my best wishes

to Times + 1913

~~John~~ Stan Bullough

A PHOTO OF "LILY ELSIE" IN A "LUCILE FROCK"

I was at Daly's at that triumphant first night of *The Merry Widow*, when everyone was acclaiming the new star whom George Edwardes had discovered. Lily Elsie was generous in her praise of me, and thanked me for the help and inspiration I had given her.

"It has been the greatest night of my life, and I owe it all to you!" she cried, throwing her arms impulsively round my neck, when I went into her dressing-room afterwards.

From that day I designed all her clothes for her both for the stage and in private life, and some of my most successful models were created for her, for once she had "found herself" she wore her clothes so charmingly that every woman who saw them wanted to have them copied.

I have never known any woman who had the power of turning men's heads in the way that Lily Elsie did. During the years I knew her she had a perfect galaxy of suitors, who used to shower presents upon her and wait at the stage doors for hours on the chance of a few words from her before she left the theatre. She was absolutely indifferent to most of them, for she once told me that she disliked the male character, and considered that men only behaved tolerably to a woman who treated them coldly.

"I have never been fool enough to give my heart to one of them," she said, "and so they think it must be worth having."

So she used to keep millionaires and foreign princes hanging about in the cold, draughty passages at Daly's while she and her mother shared a picnic supper of cold ham in her dressing-room. She honestly preferred it to champagne at the Ritz.

On the first night of *The Dollar Princess* I joined them both. Lily Elsie was looking radiant, and I noticed that she was wearing a necklace which had been sent to her by one of the richest men in London.

It had arrived as a *porte-bonheur* for her first night, and we examined it together.

It was composed of rubies, which lay like a blood-red streak round her neck. One very large and flawless diamond was suspended from it. Its value must have run into many thousands of pounds, for the stones had been specially selected.

While we were sitting looking at it, Lily Elsie's mother came in with the message that the sender was waiting outside the dressing-room to know when he might take Lily out to lunch or dinner.

"Oh, I have not one free day for a fortnight," she said carelessly. "I'm afraid he will have to wait."

"You can't be so unkind after getting that lovely present," her mother said. "Do fix up something to cheer him up a bit. I am getting tired of telling him you can't see him."

"Oh, have it your own way, then. Tell him he can come and take me out on Wednesday."

We heard his profuse thanks through the door.

"I'm always rude to men," she told me another time. "And the ruder I am the more they like me."

It was perfectly true. Her smiles and favours were sparingly dispensed, but men would do anything to win them.

Once, I remember, she came into the showroom wearing a magnificent sable coat. The mannequins crowded round to admire.

"Now don't you girls think I have done anything naughty to get this," she said. "Jack only gave it to me because he thought I might be cold."

Some of her loveliest presents came from an elderly brother and sister, members of a Lancashire mill-owning family, and immensely rich. They both adored her, and after she had refused dozens of times to marry the brother, who was old enough to be her

father, they were seized with the idea of adopting her, and she had some difficulty in resisting them tactfully. But unkind as she was to her younger suitors, she was kindness itself to this provincial couple, and used to take the sister shopping and trot them both round the town when they came up to London.

Another actress whom I used to enjoy dressing was Gertie Millar, who was as amusing and full of vitality off the stage as she was on it. She was one of the frankest women I have ever met, and would discuss her love affairs with the saleswomen, and make them laugh at the stories she told of her different admirers. She was a very home-loving woman.

"A man likes a domestic woman," she said once. "I keep . . . in love with me because he knows I would sew buttons on his trousers and put poultices on his chest, if he had a cold."

She certainly did keep him in love with her for many years.

Gertie Millar had that gift of complete absence of self-consciousness. She never pretended to an emotion she did not feel, and was always "herself" at every minute of the day, and this simplicity endeared her to everyone she came in contact with.

She had a tremendous circle of friends in every class from royalty to cabmen and charwomen. Once she told me that her friendship with the Duke of Z . . . had meant a tremendous lot in her life, for it had begun at a very bad moment when she was "down and out", with no prospect, it seemed then, of getting an engagement. Their acquaintance was the result of a characteristic act of kindness on her part. She had gone to visit Elizabeth Firth, who was ill at that time, and the Duke of Z . . . came in to inquire after the invalid. The friendship which resulted from this casual meeting changed her whole life, for after that her luck turned. His encouragement and admiration

gave her new heart and enabled her to make a brilliant success of her stage career.

Another memory I have of the year 1907 is of my daughter Esmé's marriage. She was so young at the time that her engagement was a positive shock to me, for I still saw her as a child. In the years that I had been designing dresses and building up my business she had grown a very beautiful girl, and I suppose that I ought to have realized the inevitable truth that someone would take her from me sooner or later. When it happened I was quite unprepared for it, so much so that some months before when a fortuneteller, whom I had gone to consult, told me amongst other things that my daughter would be engaged before the end of the year I laughed.

"Why, she is far too young," I said.

However the woman persisted that she saw the marriage taking place, and added that my daughter would meet her fiancé on the stage. I was rather upset at this, for I did not want her to marry an actor, and I could quite imagine the possibility of her doing so, for she loved acting and was always taking part in some amateur performance or other.

I had forgotten all about the prophecy when some months after Esmé went down to Harlow to play in a comedy, which was being given for charity. Almost at the last moment the young man who was to have taken the juvenile lead had an accident, and a frantic telegram was sent to the O.U.D.S. asking them to supply someone to take over the part. They sent an undergraduate, Viscount Tiverton, the son of the Earl of Halsbury, the Lord Chancellor, and rehearsals were started immediately.

I cannot remember much of the play, although I went to see it, but it was a great success. It was also the fulfilment of the clairvoyante's prophecy, for from the very first moment at rehearsals Lord Tiverton fell



MY DAUGHTER, ESME HALSBURY, WITH HER SON
ANTHONY TIVERTON
taken when he was two years old—he is now a "married man"

in love with Esmé, and before the final performance he had persuaded her to promise to marry him.

The first thing I heard of their engagement was when I received a frantic wire from a friend, sent to the hotel in Paris where I was staying on a short holiday, saying : "For Heaven's sake come back. Esmé is getting engaged or something."

I returned home just in time to give my consent before they took the law into their own hands and got married without it ! They were married at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, on July 7th.

The wedding was one of the prettiest of the year, and I had designed the bride's Empire dress of tulle, and sewed it myself, as I had sewn all her things since she was a baby.

She looked very beautiful and innocent as she walked down the aisle, and I prayed that her marriage might be a really happy one.

After I had sent them off on their honeymoon, and the last guest had left the reception, I went back to Hanover Square, where I put all my dreams for my daughter's happiness into a little dress of palest green chiffon. It looked like a cascade of leaves blown together, the sort of dress Eve might have worn, if she had ever worn dresses, I told myself. One day a woman came in to choose a dress. She was very beautiful, and married to a rich man. Everybody supposed the marriage to be ideally happy. She began to talk to me, and I could see that she was amused at something.

She said : "I have just come back from abroad, and soon I am going to enjoy myself very much indeed."

I asked her what she was going to do, and she replied that it was something she had already done several times, and the doing of it had given her the greatest thrill of all her life.

She explained that her husband, who was very

much in love with her, was very strict, and was above all things madly jealous. She used to slip away abroad on some pretext or other, and there indulge in a passionate love affair, with some man whose appearance pleased her. She would then arrange that the lover of the moment should write to her the most devoted letters. These she would keep carefully. On her return to England she would invite her husband's and her own relations to a dull, family dinner. On some occasions she used to place herself next to her husband. Then she would deliberately lay her bag between them, close to his hand. In the bag reposed her lover's letters, any one of which would have been sufficient to wreck her marriage and condemn her to a life of social ostracism. It was a marvellous thrill, she confessed to me, with shining eyes.

"Why once," she said, "he actually took up the bag and examined the clasp. I thought he was going to open it. It was the most exciting moment I ever had in my life!"

Her enjoyment was perfectly sincere as she told me this. She was, I think, the greatest gambler of any woman I have ever known, but ordinary stakes were not big enough for her.

I thought of her afterwards when I went over to Paris again.

Paris is a city that disturbs one's moral values. At least I have always found it so. I used to say when I was young: "I must go over to Paris to be made to feel I am a woman."

Business counts in London, but to a woman only the fact of being a woman counts in Paris. Everything conspires to make her feel this, most of all the admiration that is meted out to her by practically every male passer-by, that admiration which we resent in youth, tolerate in our middle years, and are so grateful for in our old age. The wise woman will keep away from

Paris, though, when she grows old and let it remain a city of beautiful memories.

I think that on the whole the Frenchwoman is happier in her emotional life than the Englishwoman, for her outlook is simpler and more pagan. She adjusts her values far more easily than we do, because she is practical to the core. You rarely see in France the unhappy sex-starved women you see on this side of the Channel. The majority of them marry, and here the *dot* system is of great help, but those who do not, build their lives round a lover as a matter of course. They recognize and accept a perfectly natural state of things without any hypocrisy.

This candour of theirs was typified by a little incident that happened one day in the showroom. A masseur used to come every day to massage one of my mannequins, who had severely sprained her ankle. One morning he was very late, and the girl in question was showing dresses to a haughty French Marquise, a member of one of the oldest families in France. He came in wreathed in smiles, but very apologetic.

"Pardon, that I have kept Mademoiselle waiting," he said with a low bow in the direction of the Marquise. "But I was unavoidably detained this morning. I went to give my usual massage to Madame S— (a very celebrated French actress) but Monsieur B—, who was with her in bed, refused to get up, and I had to wait quite half an hour."

My English mannequin looked rather taken aback, but the Marquise was interested.

"Monsieur B—?" she inquired. "I thought it was Monsieur L— who was the *ami*."

"Ah, non, Madame la Marquise," replied the masseur, with another low bow. "We have not seen Monsieur L— for quite a long time now."

This same masseur was a great character. He used to go from one regular client to another, retailing half

the gossip of Paris. But he was very discreet where *la noblesse* was concerned. He had the inner histories of most of the families of *Le Faubourg*, but nothing would induce him to discuss them. One of the curious complexes of modern democratic France is its secret veneration for old families.

As a rule the sacred confines of *Le Faubourg* are rigidly barred to any who have not been born within its precincts, but I, because of my Canadian-French connections, was welcomed with open arms to its insufferably dull receptions, and tedious family gatherings, on my early visits to Paris. When, however, I took up dressmaking as a means of making a living my aristocratic relations were unutterably shocked. They refused even to mention my name in the presence of the younger generation lest my unfortunate example should inspire them to rebellion.

As the years passed by and they heard reports of my progress in London, and discovered that I was not being excluded from the social fold there, they began to hold out tentative olive branches. My appearance in Paris as a *grande couturière* was, however, a great trial to them, for they were never able quite to overlook the shame of having a relation, even a distant one, who had so far forgotten the slogan of *noblesse oblige* as to enter the ranks of trade. The one reflection from which they could find a little consolation was that English people were notably eccentric, and they never failed to impress this explanation of my extraordinary conduct on all their friends.

On my last visit to Paris I was struck by the fact that the War, which has wrought so many changes in the social life of nearly every country in Europe, seems to have made so little difference to the remaining families of the old French regime. I went to one of the receptions in the Faubourg and found that everything was precisely the same as I remembered it in

my girlhood. The same elderly servants, the same port wine and *petit fours*, the same pleasant, trivial conversation, and the same narrow opinions on anything outside France. It is really maddening to discuss politics or international affairs in the Faubourg, where even travelling abroad is regarded as a disloyalty, and an almost monumental ignorance prevails on the subject of current events in England or America, or any country which is not France.

There is, though, another, and a rather beautiful, side to the Faubourg, and that is the courage with which it faces its poverty. It is a very unspectacular kind of courage for nobody even mentions the word "poverty" there, it would be an offence against one of the most sacred articles of the code. But diminishing bank balances and mortgaged acres in the Touraine have not lowered the Faubourg's crest by one centimetre. The *conseil de famille* has still absolute power to prevent Pierre from going into trade, and Hélène from marrying the handsome son of a new-rich family. The fact that Pierre may eat out his heart in secret, banished to some tumble-down château, and Hélène break hers in spinsterhood does not enter into the question. *Noblesse oblige* is an answer to many things.

CHAPTER TEN

ONLY the other day I was turning over the pages of an old ledger containing the names of some of my first clients at a time when "Lucile" was still going through its early growing-pains and I was needing all my courage to cope single-handed with what was rapidly becoming one of the biggest dressmaking houses in London. In those days every small triumph meant so much, every new name added to the books was a matter for jubilation, and the row of carriages drawn up outside the neat little house was still an exciting novelty.

So looking back after all these years I can still recapture the thrill of pleasure with which I entered the name of "The Duchess of York" on the ledger. I see that her first fitting was for "a blue satin dress with tucked yoke and sleeves", so evidently, even as long ago as in the reign of Queen Victoria, Queen Mary (as she is to-day) was fond of blue.

I believe that I owed this early royal patronage to Mrs. Willie James, then in the zenith of her career as a famous hostess, for from the very beginning she showed me the greatest kindness and did everything possible to make me known to her friends; and as her influence at Court was practically unbounded at this time the command to send a selection of models to St. James's Palace was probably the result of her generous praise of my work.

I chose simple dresses beautifully embroidered, but with nothing approaching the extreme in style, for I fancied, from what I had heard of her taste in dress, that these would be the most likely to appeal

to the Duchess of York. They were carefully packed and sent off in a carriage with my head fitter and her assistant. The latter was a raw Irish girl, very young and inexperienced, but exceedingly clever at her own work. I awaited their return with some trepidation, for although I had coached them thoroughly as to what they were to say and do I knew that a great deal depended on the success of this Court order, and I was very anxious that they should make a good impression. They came back with the cheering news that the Duchess had taken two of the dresses I had sent and ordered some more.

Of course I wanted to hear all about the visit to St. James's Palace and I sent for Mollie—the Irish girl—as the head fitter was busy. Mollie was garrulous as usual and quite ready to give her impressions of Royalty.

“Sure, it’s a fine great lady she is, the Duchess,” she began, “though from the spark in her eye I would say she has a temper of her own. But she was just as kind and simple as she could be, and she told me all about her baby (the Prince of Wales I think this was), and the cold he had on him. And I told her my own mother had brought up nine of us, and given us a drop of hot milk with a spoonful of treacle whenever we had a cold.”

Although I was inwardly wondering what was coming next, I could not resist a smile at the thought of the Duchess of York and my little Irish work-girl discussing the management of babies. Mollie continued her story. The Duchess, she said, had tried on all the dresses before choosing any, and had been very careful over both the fit and the price of the model.

“And isn’t it a wonder now,” she went on, “that the Duchess wore only ordinary cotton underclothing with Swiss embroidery on it like my very own Sunday ones. I’m thinking she keeps her silk for best.”

On the next occasion that we sent the girls to St. James's Palace for a fitting I warned Mollie that she was on no account to talk to the Duchess unless she was spoken to, and this had apparently upset her for when the Duke of York happened to come into the room as the Duchess was being fitted, Mollie, I was told, had dropped the entire contents of the large box of pins she was holding.

"But, sure, it didn't matter at all," she said in describing the incident, "the Duke is a real kind gentleman, and down he went on his knees and helped me to pick them all up."

Her visits to the Duchess of York were not the only ones to Royal patrons which Mollie had to make while she was with me, and I sometimes wondered whether her ready wit and shrewd observation delighted the august ladies she fitted as much as they did me, for she was very popular with them. I remember that once, after going to Kensington Palace to fit Princess Alice, who was one of my most faithful clients and bought nearly everything she wore from me, Mollie told me of the simplicity of the household there.

"I know they are very great people," she said, "and royal too, but for all that I'm thinking that the butler manages them all his own way, for when they were talking of some friends that they had invited for tea that afternoon, he said to them :

"Well then, you will just have to ask them to come another day, for you have forgotten that Lord and Lady — are coming to lunch, and you know there is no getting rid of them until after tea."

"And they rang up and put them off," concluded Mollie.

The Duchess of Connaught was always very charming to me and she and her daughters, the Princesses Margaret and Patricia, rarely missed one

of my mannequin parades. Prince Arthur of Connaught often came with them and used to be very interested in the models ; frequently he was present at his sisters' fittings, and used to watch them critically and occasionally offer advice.

"You know altogether too much about clothes. You'll be a perfect nuisance to your wife, when you get married," one of them said to him jokingly once.

I made all Princess Margaret's trousseau for her marriage to the Crown Prince of Sweden, and enjoyed doing it, for she was so interested in it herself and seemed to revel in the lovely materials I had got over specially from Lyons for her to choose from. She was deeply in love with her good-looking young Prince, and used to come to the showroom radiating happiness. Theirs was a real love match, and she adored him. She had a little miniature with his portrait inside set in a circle of pearls, which she wore round her neck, and she would not even take it off for her fittings. At that time I used to show the most beautiful under-clothes, filmy and transparent as gossamer, in a room set apart. It was called "The Rose Room", and was decorated in pink. In the centre of the room was an exquisite rose-pink and gold carved day-bed, which I had paid an enormous sum to have brought over from Paris. It was a copy of one which had belonged to Madame de Pompadour, and was like nothing that had been seen in London. On it used to lie an entrancingly pretty mannequin, dressed in the tea-gowns which I loved to create. No woman could resist the fascination of this room and I used to boast that I could sell anything in it. Prospective brides used to choose trousseaux costing about as much again as they had intended under its influence.

When Princess Margaret came to give her wedding order she was shown into this room, and I saw the colour deepen in her cheeks, while her eyes sparkled

with mingled shyness and excitement, just as the eyes of every little engaged girl used to sparkle when she entered my rose room. The Duchess of Connaught was all for buying some more "sensible and serviceable" underwear, but the Princess slipped her arm through her mother's and began to coax her mother, just as all daughters coax their mothers over their trousseaux, and presently the Duchess yielded and I made her a trousseau which would have delighted any girl's heart.

It was a real grief to me when I learned of her early death, for I had very sweet memories of this affectionate, gentle Princess. She was one of the most considerate people I have ever met, and was always so anxious not to give any unnecessary trouble. Once I remember she was being shown into one of the fitting-rooms when there was a great demand for them, as many women had come to fit their dresses for a forthcoming ball, and another client very rudely stepped into the room ahead of her, and practically shut the door in her face, not knowing who she was, of course, although that was no justification for such lack of manners. The saleswoman, who was attending to the Princess, was distressed and said that she would ask the woman to wait her turn, which was after the Princess, but the latter would not hear of it.

"That is quite all right, I will wait until she has finished," she said, and quietly took up her position in a queue of women in the corridor.

Princess Margaret as a young girl was very fond of having her fortune told. She once described to me how some months before she met her fiancé she had visited an old woman who lived, I believe, in a little house in Hammersmith in order to have her cards read. The fortune teller had not, of course, the least idea of the identity of the pretty girl who consulted her, for the Princess had been careful to wear very

inconspicuous clothes, and to change her appearance as much as possible, but she had been surprisingly accurate in her predictions. She had not only foretold an engagement to a foreigner of very exalted rank, but had even given the approximate date and the exact circumstances of the meeting between the Princess and her future husband, all of which had later proved correct.

Princess Margaret was not the only member of the royal family who was interested in fortune telling. I remember her once telling me that Queen Victoria loved to have the leaves in her teacup read, and had learnt to read them herself from an old woman who lived near Balmoral with whom she used sometimes to have tea on her afternoon drives. After that the Queen would occasionally be persuaded to read the teacups for some of the members of the royal family, and this was considered a great treat.

Princess Patricia had always very good judgment in choosing her clothes, and is one of the best-dressed royalties in Europe, I think. On one occasion she brought Princess Mary to the showroom with her to see the models. At that time Princess Mary was only a young girl in her teens, and she was very much impressed with the collection of evening dresses which were put on by the mannequins for them.

"They are more lovely than anything I have ever seen," she told the saleswoman, "but I could never afford them. You see my dress allowance is only £50 a year."

Princess Mary was very methodical in the expenditure of her money and had been taught to keep a careful account of each item, for the Queen believed in making her daughter cultivate economical habits, and if she exceeded her allowance it was never supplemented. If I remember rightly she received it twice a year, half in the spring and half in the autumn, and

she had to balance the two amounts so that she was not left without anything after the first half of her allowance had been spent to carry her through the months which had to elapse before she received the next half-year's money.

It was from Princess Patricia that I learned that King George was the arbiter in the matter of the fashions worn by both the Queen and Princess Mary before her marriage. It was his taste that ruled the very distinctive style of dressing adopted by both of them, not their own. The King has the greatest dislike for anything bordering on the exaggerated and liked to see his daughter dressed as simply as she would be if she had been born into the family of a country squire. She was expected to defer to his wishes in this, and although the Queen was naturally under no obligation to do the same, she was always guided by the King's taste in choosing her own clothes.

Being presented to the President of the United States at The White House in Washington is a very different affair from a presentation to Queen Mary at Buckingham Palace. The latter, as everyone knows, is a strictly formal occasion, but with the former there is no ceremony of any kind. You just get some Senator of your acquaintance (Senator Warren acted for me) to send in your name and request an audience. If the President grants one, you arrive any time between ten and one on the morning you are expected, dressed in ordinary morning outfit. You take your place in a queue in a long hall—quite an ordinary, hideously decorated hall, hung with dingy green rep curtains (at least they were green rep when I was there)—from which you pass into a large, ugly brown-and-green room with a long table down the centre covered with green cloth. It is here the President receives you. You follow the queue slowly round the table, and when you reach the President the official

calls out your name, the President shakes you by the hand and you pass on your way if he does not speak to you.

In my case the President stepped forward, shook hands with me warmly and said: "I'm so pleased to meet you, Lady Duff Gordon. I've just been reading your 'Memories'." He talked quickly, asking me questions and never waiting to hear my replies, and did not listen when I tried to explain that the "Memories" he was talking about were those of my husband's aunt, Lucy Lady Duff Gordon, who had died in the early 'eighties !

The rest of the queue, meanwhile, were getting restive. The looks they sent me were not exactly pleasant ones, though it was no fault of mine. Senator Warren told me afterwards that I ought to feel highly elated as Roosevelt seldom spoke to any of his callers. So, looking back, I do feel grateful to the "Memories" of my husband's aunt, because it was certainly those "Memories" which gained me five minutes' attention from that very noble and great President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WHEN 1909 dawned I was at the height of my success in London. Orders were pouring in, and I was making more money than I knew what to do with, yet my restless spirit impelled me to seek new fields.

I have never been a business woman in the strict sense of the word, although I have made a fortune in trade. To me it was always the creative side of my work that mattered. I designed my dresses far more with the object of pleasing myself than to make money, though I was glad enough to spend it when it was made.

During my life, especially in the years when I worked in America, I have met many of the world's most successful men. They have all told me the same thing, that the thrill of building up a fortune, of seeing it grow little by little, and feeling themselves in command of more money year by year was the best part of it.

Perhaps women are different. I know I am. Money never represented money to me, it only stood for the things I wanted to buy. It was something turned over quickly and easily, made to be spent as it came in. In the years when I was earning thousands of pounds I was as ignorant of the actual mechanism of my business as a child. I never knew what my capital was, and I have never known my bank balance in those days, except that it was a very considerable one. I never bothered to save anything, and left others to speculate for me, and so eventually I lost most of the money which years of work had brought me. Perhaps

if I had been wiser and thought more of the future then, I should be happier to-day, but I am not sure. Life is full of compensations. I had a wonderful time during those years when I spent recklessly, and gave even more recklessly, and I think I made a great many other people happy. Now, although I am no longer a rich woman, I still have enough to live "comfortably", as most people call it, and I have my memories. Can anyone ask more of life ?

In 1909 "Lucile's" was making nearly £40,000 a year, and my husband pointed out to me that with my share of this I was a comparatively rich woman. He suggested that I should take a holiday. I needed one very badly, and had been urged to take one several times before. I made up my mind to go to America.

That was an exceptionally busy year. Courts, weddings and plays kept us working at full pressure the whole time, and it was not until the winter, the quietest time of the dressmaker's year, that I was able to get away.

So I spent Christmas in New York, and had my first taste of the marvellous hospitality of Americans. I arrived there with a number of letters of introduction, and before I had been at my hotel three days I had received more invitations than I could possibly accept, and made more friends than I should have made in London in three months, had the position been reversed and were I a visiting American.

The Americans have left us far behind in the art of welcoming a stranger, and that is why our unfriendliness is a continual surprise to them when they come over to Europe. From the moment I landed I was overwhelmed with little kindnesses and attentions, and everyone seemed to have made some delightful plan for me over the holidays, so that I should be made to feel happy and at home.

However, I chose to spend Christmas with an old

friend, Elsie de Wolfe, that very charming American, who is now the wife of Sir Charles Mendl. I had known her for years both in London and in Paris, where she passed the summer months at her beautiful Villa Trianon in Versailles, and she had been delighted at the prospect of my coming to New York and was the first person to meet me when I stepped off the boat.

Elsie and I ate our Christmas dinner at the Waldorf Hotel with Charles Deering, the multi-millionaire, who made his colossal fortune out of his famous "harvester" machines. We were all very gay, and like everybody who goes to New York, I was already feeling myself recharged with the vitality of all the people with whom I came in contact. The effect of the climate, which always gives one the illusion of being able to do twice as much there as in London, was beginning to make me forget how tired I had been feeling before I left England, and I was enjoying it all enormously.

The restaurant was crowded with the smartest people in New York, and of course Elsie and I began to talk about clothes and pick out the dresses which we liked the best. We decided that most of them were copies of Paris models, but that their wearers had chosen them indiscriminately and without taste.

"If you knew how much they have cost," said Elsie, "you would probably be astonished. We pay far more for clothes here than in Europe, but we have no really good designers, and we have to buy models brought over from France."

"Some of these women are extraordinarily attractive," I said, "but they don't know how to dress. I wish I could teach them."

"Why don't you? I have a splendid idea. You must open a shop over here. American women will love your dresses, and they will think it absolutely the last word in chic to be dressed by an English society woman."



THE LATE LORD HALSBURY WITH ANTHONY, HIS GRANDSON
AND MINE

he was 88 years old in this picture

From that moment I was fired with enthusiasm. Her plan seemed to me the ideal solution to the boredom which had been beginning to descend on me in London. It would mean a widening of my life and interests, and I had enough faith in myself to believe that it would also bring in a great deal of money. I had more than enough capital to justify the risk of such a venture, and I knew that a branch in New York could easily be run in conjunction with the London house.

Before I did anything I consulted two friends, excellent business men both of them, whose advice I could trust. One was Arthur Brisbane, the other Sam Newhouse, the copper king. After hearing all particulars they were both just as enthusiastic as I was, and promised to help me in every possible way.

The first thing to do was to look for a suitable house, and here their advice was very useful, for they chose the neighbourhood, and helped me over the arrangements for the lease, when I eventually found one. It was in West Thirty-sixth Street, and although it was not quite as roomy as I should have liked, it was excellent for a start.

Having taken the house I gave orders for it to be decorated in the same soft shade of grey which I had found so successful in Hanover Square, and then, after installing Celia, who had been my right hand in London for many years, as manageress, I returned to England to prepare the collection of models which I would take out with me for the opening in New York.

Meanwhile the astute publicity man, whom I had engaged in America, had begun his campaign, and the newspapers came out with columns about the first English lady of title who was to open a shop to dress the four hundred. There were stories of myself and of my husband's family, even the Duff Gordon family ghost had half a column to itself, and the coat of arms

was reproduced in a dozen illustrations. There were pictures of the illustrious ladies I had dressed in London, of my royal clients and the dresses they had bought, and of my sister, Elinor Glyn, already well-known in the States as a novelist. My daughter's marriage was described in glowing accounts, and there were pictures of her home, her husband, and her father-in-law, Lord Halsbury.

Of course I was delighted at all this publicity, but when I said that I should have preferred it to be directed rather on my dresses than on my social qualifications and aristocratic relations my American friends were surprised.

“But that is exactly what is going to make you a success in New York!” they one and all told me. “Everybody will flock to you at first just for the sake of being dressed by a woman with an English title. Afterwards, of course, you will stand on your own merits and people will come to you because they like your clothes.”

So there was nothing to do but submit to being “Lady Duff Gordon, first English swell to trade in New York”, as one paper put it, rather than “‘Lucile’, the famous dressmaker, opening a branch in New York”, as I would have chosen to word it.

In the end I had to admit that my publicity man had been right, for he had understood his own people. The one thing that counts in America is self-advertisement of the most blatant sort. Publicity which we would set down as incredibly bad taste is only taken as a matter of course there, and one simply has to realize from the start that the louder you blow your own trumpet the more likely is it to be heard above the noise of your neighbour's, so I would advise those whose lungs are not strong enough for a contest of this sort to keep out of it altogether.

I am referring now to the commercial side of life

in the States especially, but it reflects to a great extent on the social life. The keynote of everything there is to impress all around you. Impress them with your ancestry, impress them with your possessions, with your bank-book, with the price you paid for your car, or your dog, or your hat, remembering that everything you are and say and do will be taken at your own valuation.

I could never quite get used to this, although in time I learnt to understand, learnt even to take advantage of it. If I wanted to sell a very exclusive and particularly expensive model to the wife of a millionaire, I discovered that far more infallible than any discussions of its beauty, or of how much it suited her, was the casual information that "Mrs. So-and-So", the wife of her husband's business rival, had just ordered two new gowns. After that I always sold the dress, and generally two or three others with it. If the husband happened to be with her he would be my principal ally, and would order a dozen or more dresses on the spot.

Englishmen, as a rule, although they like to see their wives well-dressed, do not bother very much about their clothes, but it is quite the reverse in America. There the husband looks on his wife as a definite advertisement. If she is shabby or not as resplendent as she might be, it reflects on his prosperity, whereas if she makes other women envious of her wonderful sable coat, or diamond necklace, it shows other men how well his business is doing. So he does not mind how much he pays for her dress allowance, since he regards it in the light of a very necessary investment. If she lets him down in public by not being in the forefront of fashion he is just as annoyed with her as the Englishman is when his wife presents him with a sheaf of bills far exceeding her dress allowance.

I remember one instance which happened soon

after I had opened in New York, which is very typical of this attitude on the part of the American man.

I designed a dress for the wife of one very rich business man. She was a beautiful little creature, a perfect medieval type, with a clear, ivory skin, regular features and that shade of red hair which we call Titian. I admired her so much that it was a pleasure to design for her, and I made her a dress such as she would have worn if one of the Renaissance painters had put her beauty on canvas. It was in palest green velvet, with a little, tight bodice sewn with pearls, and wide sleeves embroidered in the same pattern of tiny pearls. It was one of the loveliest dresses I ever made, and even the girls in the shop exclaimed how perfectly it suited her. She was delighted with it, although she was rather doubtful about the pearls.

"I suppose they are not real?" she asked me.

"Oh, no, they would be worth a fortune if they were," I answered, thinking naturally that she was alarmed at its probable cost.

A few days later I discovered how mistaken I had been. She came into the shop nearly in tears. Her husband had, she said, been furious with her. She had worn her new dress at a dinner party, which they had given at their beautiful house. Unfortunately one of the guests had been another business man, equally rich, who had brought his wife. Her dress, of red satin, had had a collar of real diamonds sewn round the neck! This was bad enough, but worse was to follow, for she had actually asked her hostess in a patronizing tone whether the tiny pearls, which I had thought a positive inspiration on my model, were real. So my poor little client, to her own and her husband's intense discomfiture, had been obliged to admit that they were imitation.

Afterwards there had been a painful domestic scene and she had been absolutely forbidden to wear

the dress again. As a solace for his wounded pride the husband had gone out and bought her a sort of dog-collar in diamonds, an atrocity I thought it, but it had cost a fortune, and she had come to me to ask me to design her the sort of dress which would best show it off.

For the moment I was tempted to refuse to make her anything else, but I realized that she was desperately in earnest and had been terribly distressed at the *contretemps* over the green velvet. So I made her a white satin dress, which had exactly the same purpose as the drapings of white satin on which the jewels are laid in jewellers' windows, and when she had on her full regalia the effect was very much the same, but she was overjoyed with it, and so was the husband.

But it taught me a lesson. I never again made the mistake in America of trying to sell something which was not costly enough, however beautiful it might be.

I was reminded of this story on my next visit to Paris, when I accompanied a friend who was going to buy a pair of shoes. She went to Yantony, and if you have not heard of Yantony, then you do not know your Paris. Yantony has his shop in the Place Vendôme, but he is more than a shoemaker, he is a legend. To buy your shoes from him gives you immediately a definite social prestige, it marks you as one of the elect. Yantony is very, very autocratic ; he is also very expensive. First of all you have to "consult" him, in other words to show him your foot. If it is sufficiently aristocratic to do him credit you may breathe again. He will work for you. He has, however, been known to close his doors on world-famous actresses and notably generous millionaires, for Yantony is not to be bribed. He will only make for whom he will. The next step is that you pay him £1,000 (25,000 francs

at pre-War value) down as a deposit, after which he will make shoes for you, and you may display your foot proudly before the élite, who will recognize the master's handiwork at a glance.

All this was told me by the American woman who took me for the first time to the little shop in the Place Vendôme. I was immensely amused and said that I must have a pair of shoes made there. Yantony came to inspect my foot. It was a solemn moment, at least for my friend, for I could see she was quite nervous, and was visibly relieved when he approved of it.

While we were there the wife of a Chicago millionaire, whom I had met several times in New York, came in to be fitted for a pair of shoes. She and her husband were staying at the Ritz, and she was evidently elated because someone had introduced her to Yantony's shoes. She informed me proudly that he made for *le Prince de —* and *la marquise de —* and reeled out one title after another, until I was quite dazed, and glad to leave the shop.

The next day she rang me up and asked me to lunch at her hotel. She and her husband were in a difficult position and would be most grateful if I would give them my advice. I wondered what on earth it was, but of course said that I would do my best to help them. When I arrived I could see that they were both upset, but we talked of trivial things during lunch, and it was not until we had finished our coffee in their magnificent suite that the distressing subject was broached by the husband.

His wife, he told me, had been to Yantony to have her shoes fitted, in fact I had seen her there. Unfortunately, after I had left the shop, it transpired, the shoes, when they had been tried on, had hurt her, and she had been so unwise as to find fault with Yantony, and criticize his work. This rank heresy had so offended the autocrat that he had, then and

there, handed her back her deposit, and told her that never again in his life would he make her another pair of shoes. The poor woman had come home rudely shaken in her self-confidence to recount the direful tragedy to her husband. He had immediately rushed round to the shop with the only olive branch he could think of—a cheque for double the amount of the deposit—only to be met with wounded dignity and a blank refusal. It was most regrettable for Monsieur, but Yantony could never receive Madame in his shop again. There was not enough money in America to pay him to work for her.

This was where I came in. Would I, for surely I would not appeal in vain on their behalf, act as mediator?

It was all so ludicrous that I nearly burst out laughing, but they were both perfectly serious about it. The wife was overwhelmed at the thought of her *gaffe*, which she dreaded above all things might at any moment reach the ears of some of her friends; and the husband was genuinely puzzled at having come upon something which was quite out of his depth. He could not even pretend to understand the pride which had refused his cheque. All he knew was that his wife would not be able, on her return to America, to show shoes which had been made at the smartest shop in Europe.

Well, of course, I went round to the shop, where I had to listen to Yantony's side of the story. Eventually I was able to restore peace, and two very happy Americans caught the next boat with a triumphant array of shoe boxes, bearing the neat label of "the aristocrat's bootmaker". They told me when I went to see them off that they had spent over fifteen thousand dollars on shoes alone during their visit to Paris, and this was not a twentieth part of what the wife had spent on dresses and hats.

Probably I shall be accused of exaggeration in these figures, for I think that most people have forgotten the wave of extravagance which swept over the fashionable world about this time, and lasted until the War. Women literally spent fortunes on their wardrobes, especially in New York, which was following the lead of Paris, and, having more money, surpassing it in its positively staggering expenditure. Even I, who have always set my face against ostentation, was obliged to advertise my models in some papers as "Money Dresses" before I opened in New York.

"I call these money dresses because it takes so much to buy them," I began my article, and indeed it was true.

Only the other day I came across an old ledger which I had in New York, when I first opened there. It gives a fair idea of the dress bills of some of my clients. I think it might interest most people to compare them with present-day figures, so I give them here.

These particular figures were for clothes supplied to Mrs. Van Valkenbergh, who was called "The Ten Million Dollar Widow" by the cheap Press of the day.

Evening wrap . . .	Four thousand dollars
Evening gown . . .	Four hundred dollars
Afternoon gown . . .	Three hundred dollars
Afternoon wrap . . .	Four hundred dollars
Parasol . . .	One hundred dollars

All the expenditure was on the same scale, and this would have been considered quite an average dress bill for a society woman.

The largest sums of all were spent on hats, for the craze for ospreys and other valuable plumage was at its height, and women would go about



MYSELF IN 1910
when I opened "Lucile" in New York

with the equivalent of hundreds of pounds on their heads.

The fashionable hat at that time, for which there was a mania very much like the recent one for the *bowler*, was christened "The Indian Chief". The aigrettes upon this one hat were taken from the breasts of forty mother herons, and the whole hat, loaded down with these feathers, cost exactly five hundred pounds.

I am glad to remember that I was one of the first to oppose this wanton cruelty and extravagance, and the ribbon-trimmed hats, which I brought in, did a great deal towards killing the popularity of plumage, for they were both younger and prettier.

Another expensive item in the wardrobe of the fashionable woman of that time was footwear, as I have already mentioned. Evening slippers could run away with hundreds of pounds, especially if trimmed with feathers, which were the rage then. From two hundred to three hundred pounds a pair was not considered outrageous. Many of my American clients would think nothing of ordering a pair to match each of their evening gowns, perhaps ten or a dozen in a season. One heiress, the daughter and grand-daughter of two of the richest men in New York, was not even satisfied with that. I made her a wonderful dress in a deep red velvet, which suited her dark, almost gypsy-like type perfectly; with it she wore her famous diamonds, a magnificent tiara and necklace.

I loved the dress and tried tactfully to persuade her to wear it without jewels, or at most a single rope of pearls, for such a display on a young girl (she was only twenty), seemed to me the height of bad taste. She would not listen to me, of course, and only asked me to design her a pair of shoes to go with it. I sketched a charming little pair in the same velvet as the dress,

with ribbons to lace cross-wise over the instep and tie in a bow at the ankle. As she had very pretty feet I thought this style would suit her better than any other. But she was most disappointed with the sketch, and went straight off to a very fashionable and fabulously expensive bootmaker, who designed her a pair of slippers sewn with real diamonds and rubies, and costing over a thousand pounds.

Money was spent so readily in the States before the War because it was so easily made. In those boom years, when I first opened my New York branch, trade of every description was flourishing, and men of humble birth, who had worked all their youth for a few dollars a week, suddenly found themselves with almost unlimited money at their command. Of course it went to their heads, and for the time being they lost all sense of ordinary values. I remember, as an instance of this, one woman whose husband had made a fortune through the discovery of oil on his land. One of the first things he did was to bring her to me with *carte blanche* to choose as many dresses as she liked. She paid my special fee for a personal consultation, five hundred dollars, and I designed her several dresses. The clothes, in which she came to be fitted, were of the simplest cut, bought at the local shop of the small town in which they had lived, and her hands were still roughened from hard work. On one of them she wore a beautiful wrist watch, set in diamonds. Her husband, she told me proudly, had just paid five thousand dollars for it.

The following day, when she came to the shop again, she told me casually that she had been robbed at her hotel, and that the watch was among the missing articles. At her next fitting I happened to be in the showroom to see another woman, who had come from a long distance, and could not spare the time to visit my studio, and noticed the watch on her wrist again.

"I am glad to see you have got it back again," I said. "Did the police catch the thief?"

"Oh, no, it is another watch. My husband went straight off to Cartier's and got me one just like it."

And that was a woman who, only a year before, had been counting every cent of the weekly household bills and doing her own washing.

CHAPTER TWELVE

TOWARDS the end of February, 1910, I embarked on the *Lusitania* for New York, taking with me the hundred and fifty models I had designed to conquer that sophisticated city, and my four prettiest mannequins : Gamela, Corisande, Florence, and Phyllis.

We were given a great send-off at a farewell fashion parade, which I held at Hanover Square to show the models which were being taken across the Atlantic. A thousand guests crowded into the big showroom ; the Duchess of Rutland, Lady Dudley, Lady Angela Forbes, Mrs. Asquith and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Tennant, were some of them I remember. Everyone was tremendously enthusiastic and the girls themselves were so excited that Celia, who was to chaperone them on the voyage, could hardly keep them in order.

Of course the American papers got hold of the story of this farewell parade, and came out with columns about it. My mannequins were described as "Crusaders of the Dream Dresses, beautiful girls going on a new mission of mercy . . . the great mission of spreading among New York's Four Hundred the cult of the dream dress, that wondrous product of the genius of Lady Duff Gordon."

Then followed glowing descriptions of the girls . . . "Gamela . . . tall and shapely and stately, with hair like the raven's wing, her unfathomable eyes shining with light."

"Corisande . . . exquisitely English, fair and slim, pink and white, graceful and sweet and gentle, a girl after the heart of Marcus Stone, who ought to sit

dreamy-eyed on a marble seat in an old-world garden, thinking unutterable and tender thoughts."

"Florence . . . what the French call 'spirituelle'. She sparkles ; her eyes are wandering diamonds and her smile is born of wit. She is life ; she is Spring, with just a dazzle of sauciness."

"Phyllis . . . should be placed in a picture-frame at once. Even she should hold a young lamb and lift up her glorious eyes to Heaven for ever . . ."

Was it a wonder that my mannequins had become famous before ever they set their dainty little feet on American soil ?

When we landed there was an eager crowd of impressionable American youth waiting to welcome these victorious "crusaders", and we were almost mobbed by photographers. Placards informed us that the "Titled Dressmaker and Her Golden Girls Arrive To-day To Show Americans How To Dress".

By this time the house in West Thirty-sixth Street had been got ready for us, and I was charmed with the scheme of decorations which Elsie de Wolfe had designed for me. It was a lovely, big, old, brownstone house, with massive doors, imposing staircases and high ceilings, an ideal setting for my parades. At one end of the long showroom the miniature stage, a replica of the one in Hanover Square, had been put up and draped with curtains of misty blue chiffon, and divans and comfortable chairs lined the walls. Nothing remained to be done except to send out the invitations and supervise the final details.

I could never forget that first fashion parade in America, for it was one of the milestones of my career. Long before the orchestra began the soft prelude which heralded the entrance of the first mannequin the room was crowded with "the most stylishly dressed of New York women, leaders of fashion, leaders of suffrage, leaders of music, leaders of dramatic art", as one

newspaper described the gathering next day. From the moment that Gamela parted the heavy grey curtains and stepped out, a vision of beauty in a ball gown of undulating, aquamarine blue, it was a triumphant success.

I looked round at that audience of women, the richest, most sophisticated women in the world, and knew that I had provided them with just the new sensation they had been waiting for. Once again, as I had done in London, I had turned the serious business of buying clothes into a social occasion.

What a reception my "emotional dresses" had. The names intrigued them: practical New York had never thought of going out to dine in "Love Will Find Out A Way", nor to lunch in "The Wine of Life". They pictured their young daughters in "The Liquid Whisper Of Early Spring", attending their first ball, and themselves in "Essence Of The Dusk" or "Leon Bakst" attending the splendid entertainments which were then a feature of social life in New York.

When the parade was ended the saleswomen found that they had booked orders for over a thousand gowns.

Those were wonderful days in New York for me, for all doors were opened to me. I was invited to every ball and party given by the members of "The Four Hundred", I was feted and treated as though I had been a visiting royalty. New York took me to its hospitable heart; I became the rage. It is difficult for English people to realize what this sort of thing means in America, for we have nothing like it. I could hardly put my nose outside my hotel without encountering Press men and photographers; my telephone kept ringing all day; perfect strangers asked if they might call on me or give me invitations to go to their houses; I had a "fan mail" of hundreds of letters every day; and from a dozen or more towns came requests for me to go and lecture and display my wonderful models

there. Several newspapers asked me to contribute weekly fashion articles, and eventually W. R. Hearst secured me for his group. I blossomed forth as a journalist in the *New York American*.

Meanwhile I was dressing "everybody who mattered in society"—I quote from another newspaper, not my own articles—and incidentally making a fortune in doing it. I have still an order list for April, 1910. It only covers three days, yet I see there were orders booked for two hundred and ten dresses.

Madame Nordica, the opera singer, Mrs. F. Gould, Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt, Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish and Mrs. Payne Whitney were among the clients on the list, none of the dresses cost less than three hundred dollars (£60 in those days), and there were hats, gloves and underclothes to go with them. I was offered any sum I liked to ask for personal consultations. In addition to this I could have made enormous sums, had I wanted to, in advertisement, for merely the fact of my being seen at any hotel or restaurant proclaimed its chic, and I was offered blank cheques to allow my name to appear in connection with various enterprises. I remember once that the management of a big store wrote offering me the equivalent of £1,000, five thousand dollars, to walk into one of the departments, buy some small thing and allow the newspapers to record my presence there.

Then there were the new-rich who asked me to become members of their house-parties or yachting parties for a consideration, so that the news that they were entertaining a woman of title might be circulated, and the hotel managers who invited me to stay in their best suites of rooms, and demand any fee I liked instead of paying one. This is not a custom I care for, although I am aware that it is extensively practised both in the States and in Europe. In London just before the War it reached its height and many of

the women I dressed used to admit quite openly that they made hundreds of pounds a year by taking some social lion, or better still, some royal personage, to various restaurants. Several of the restaurants had actually a fixed scale of prices which varied according to the rank of the distinguished guest and his or her publicity value, and this was paid over to the hostess the day after the visit.

Naturally all the women who made money in this way were of the highest social position, and although it was an open secret nobody ever commented on it. Very much the same thing went on in America, but there I found people even more frank about it, and theatrical and other celebrities seemed to take it quite as a matter of course that they should be "bought" at so much for a luncheon or dinner.

When I first started in New York I rather shunned all this limelight, but it was pointed out to me that it was an absolute necessity if I intended to make a success of my business. As I have already stated, to be unadvertised in New York is to be unknown, and I had to grow used to it. Once, I remember, my publicity manager arranged a dinner at the restaurant which was then the latest craze. I have forgotten its name now, and it has been closed for many years, for nothing is more fickle than the public taste in New York, and restaurants and night clubs spring up with mushroom growth only to fade out after a few short seasons. This particular restaurant made a feature of its decorations, which were in the form of a Grecian palace with stately pillars, and couches in place of the ordinary chairs.

There was to be a special gala night, and it was decided that I should dine there with my beautiful mannequin, Gamela, who would wear a dress designed on Grecian lines. Gamela always looked like a creature out of the Old World, and in the flowing robe of white

chiffon with its stencilled border and with her lovely black hair dressed in a loose knot she looked like some goddess stepped out of the pages of mythology. The third member of our party was Raymond Duncan, one of the most amazing people I have ever met. Like his sister, Isadora, who was one of my friends, he has been too lavishly endowed with what we generally describe, most inadequately, as "artistic temperament", to be altogether happy. He cannot become reconciled to modern life any more than she could.

His revolt against present-day conditions and particularly against present-day clothes has led him to adopt a highly original form of dress, inspired by his studies of Ancient Greece. He is completely unself-conscious and this enables him to walk about the crowded Boulevards in Paris, or along Fifth Avenue in New York, dressed in a Grecian tunic, his bare feet thrust into sandals, and his long, black hair, streaked with grey, falling to his shoulders, bound with a gold filet. It says a great deal for the force of his personality that although the passers-by stare at him they never laugh.

I only found him ridiculous once, and that was a few years ago when I saw him careering down the Champs-Élysées at the wheel of a very old and very dilapidated Ford. His long robes billowing out behind him and his hair flying in the wind created such an incongruous picture of Ancient Carthage allied to Modern Detroit that the spectacle was irresistibly funny.

Once I had seen the New York branch firmly established with a flourishing clientele, and installed a competent staff of English and American workpeople, I went back to London, leaving it in the hands of my manager, Mr. Duggan, and Mr. Abraham Merritt, the former an Englishman, the latter an American. I should have liked to remain in the States longer,

but there were the Courts coming on and I had a great many orders waiting for me.

I did not return to New York until the following May, when I decided to pay a short visit there to see that everything was going on well. It was not. I had no sooner arrived than the bombshell burst. When I landed I was struck by what I can only describe as a sort of electricity in the atmosphere at the Customs. Nothing was said to me and the officials were perfectly polite, but I noticed that they examined my luggage with more than the usual attention, and afterwards they whispered among themselves, although I had nothing out of the ordinary to declare. It was rather puzzling, and I wondered idly about it as I drove to the Ritz, where I had booked a suite; however, I came to the conclusion that I must have imagined something that did not exist. I was soon to discover my mistake.

The next morning Elsie de Wolfe came early to welcome me, and as I was just about to have breakfast I asked her to join me. While we were breakfasting the morning papers were brought to our table, and Elsie opened one and began scanning the headlines. Suddenly I saw her eyes fixed on one column, and she put down the paper hurriedly with some excuse that there was nothing fit to read in it. I had seen enough to make me suspicious, and in spite of her remonstrances I opened it. My own name stared me in the face, in big letters right across the front sheet.

"Lady Duff Gordon, Chairman of Lucile's, noted dressmaking firm, concerned in alleged Customs Fraud" . . . there was a great deal more, which I was too upset to read. The main purport was that my managers had been accused of falsifying the firm's invoices with intent to avoid the payment of full duty on the dresses and other garments imported from the London house.

I ordered a car immediately and rushed round to

the house in West Thirty-sixth Street. Here I found everything in chaos, several of the girls in tears, and women who had come for fittings gathered in little groups discussing the affair. I was told that just before I got there Customs officers had driven up in a van and impounded the greater part of the stock ; they had taken away ninety-four dresses, several crates of hats, underclothes, and other things.

While I was trying to put a brave face on it, and restore confidence among the staff, a man arrived with the official intimation that a civil suit was being brought against me in the Federal Courts for the recovery of nearly fifty thousand dollars, as compensation for arrears of duty. One of the mannequins, an exceptionally pretty little American girl, managed to extract from him the further information that the Customs had been contemplating proceedings against my managers for some considerable time, but had delayed to take action until I, the head of the firm and the person legally responsible for its transgressions, arrived.

Up to this time I had no knowledge of American law, and was not disposed to take my position so seriously as I might have done. I knew that I had been absolutely guiltless in the matter. I had merely sent off the models from London, and there my responsibility had ended ; it had never occurred to me that I was in any real danger. My friends soon enlightened me. They were all dreadfully worried on my behalf, and warned me that I might very easily find myself in gaol as a result of my managers' folly. Elsie de Wolfe insisted that I must have the very best lawyer in New York, so she engaged Bainbridge Colby to defend me. She told me that he had a splendid reputation for winning nearly every case he took on, and the force of his personality could sway any jury, even in the face of hard facts.

The next day Mr. Colby came to see me in my hotel, and I realized that he was a very masterful person. From the moment that he took over the case he kept me virtually a prisoner. He would not let me go out, and forbade me to see anybody except my most intimate friends. This, he explained, was to prevent my being "got at" by the reporters. He was afraid that I might be convicted out of my own mouth, and make all sorts of injudicious statements which might prejudice my case.

I told him that I had not the least intention of giving any newspaper interviews, which seemed to reassure him a little, but he explained that it would be so easy for me to be taken unawares and trapped into discussing my case with someone who was apparently a sympathetic listener, while in reality he or she would be a reporter who specialized in "Confessions",

Reporters on the cheap "yellow press", he said, were usually in alliance with the police, and were often actually paid by them to secure evidence which would be inadmissible in England if obtained in such a way. By asking leading questions they would generally be able to get the accused person to make some statement, which was capable of being twisted into an admission of guilt. In order to secure such a "confession", he told me, reporters would not scruple to use any ruse, and would frequently take the part of the waiter or chambermaid, whose sympathy would invite confidence. So before he would take over my case he exacted a promise that I would obey him implicitly as to whom I saw; he would not even let me answer the telephone until I had ascertained that the caller was a personal friend.

"I am going to have the greatest difficulty in proving your innocence," he said, "and I absolutely refuse to defend you unless you put yourself in my hands."

It was on his advice that I put in a plea admitting my liability as the head of Lucile's in the affair, although denying all knowledge of what had happened, and the means by which my managers had been evading dress duties.

A few days later I was summoned to see the District Attorney. He put me through a very searching examination and asked me all sorts of questions as to how my business was conducted. He had been distinctly hostile at the start of the interview, but before I left he became charming and told me that he believed in my innocence, and would do everything in his power to help me. I offered, through Mr. Colby, to settle part of the claim in order to keep the case out of court, but the officials of the Treasury Department opposed this on the grounds that nothing less than the full amount of nearly fifty thousand dollars would cover the loss of the Customs through the undervaluation practised by my managers.

So there was nothing for it but to go before the Grand Jury. Mr. Colby was confident that I would come out of this ordeal with flying colours.

"You are the most persuasive woman I have ever met," he told me, "and if you have the courage to go before the Jury you will probably win your case."

I shall never forget the morning when my case was heard. It was raining, a fine, steady drizzle, and as we drove to the Court I felt horribly depressed. The streets looked so unfamiliar and unfriendly and I had such a longing suddenly to be back in London. I pictured the house in Hanover Square, with the long lines of cars in front of it, and the showrooms filled with women choosing gowns for Ascot. It seemed so far away.

Then I realized that everything depended on my remaining calm and keeping my temper, and I walked into the gloomy room with my head held high, and

wearing one of my prettiest dresses, which Elsie de Wolfe had made me put on, "because it was lovely enough to impress even a hard-hearted old jury".

I had laughed at her when she said this, for it seemed absurd to imagine that the "twelve good men and true" would take an accused person's dress into account, but she was nearer the mark than I could have guessed. I had forgotten I was in New York.

I had expected to find the court crowded, for the case had aroused a great deal of interest, and I was considerably relieved to find nobody in the room except the members of the Jury and the District Attorney. I was given a seat right at one end of the room, where I sat facing them all.

They went through the evidence, and I could feel them growing more hostile every moment. One of them, a great, broad-shouldered man with a shock of fiery red hair, shook his fist at me.

"Do you think we are going to believe this nonsense of the managers being in the wrong?" he shouted. "The owner of the shop is the one who is at the back of this case. You are not going to get off through putting the blame on somebody else."

I thought it was time to appeal to chivalry, so taking up my chair I walked down to the jurors' table and seated myself at it, right in the midst of the enemies' camp as it were.

"I cannot hear what you are saying," I said, looking as forlorn and pathetic as I possibly could.

They made room for me without a word. That turned the tide in my favour, for they were so surprised at my courage, and so amused at my ignorance of judicial formalities, that they listened favourably to my defence.

I was ordered to pay ten thousand dollars, quite enough for a piece of stupidity, in which I had taken no part, but certainly less than Mr. Colby had expected.

on a claim of nearly five times that amount. When we discussed it together afterwards he told me that it was undoubtedly due to the favourable impression I had made on the Jury.

After I had been in America for some time I grew to understand this little incident, and why my little gesture had changed the attitude of the Jury. Most of us always associate chivalry with the old world, yet in reality it belongs far more to the new. America is infinitely more chivalrous in its dealings with women than Europe, and it is difficult to over-estimate the effect this has on one's daily life in the States. It is typical of America that it should have coined the phrase "sex appeal", for no country in the world is so swayed by it. The American girl with her independence, her love of a good time, her well-paid job, is secure in her position because behind her stands the American man, whose pleasure it is to give her all these things. She is used to it from babyhood, she is petted by her father, whom she twists round her little finger, just as she is petted later by her adoring husband, who slaves to buy her pretty clothes, and give her holidays whether he ought to afford them or not.

If she goes to work she finds the same key-note of sex appeal in whatever job she takes. The head of any firm would not dream of exacting the same high standard from his girl secretaries as he would from men. I do not for a moment suggest that he would not get it, for the American girl is efficient to the last degree, but if he did not he would be much milder in his judgment than he would be to a male clerk. The same sort of thing extends to all classes. Any woman who has driven a car in New York knows the value of a sweet smile turned in the direction of a traffic policeman; it will get her through far better than the most convincing argument.

The American man is, I think, much more susceptible to sex than the Englishman, which is probably the reason for the fact that American women are spoilt, and, as a whole, very selfish. I have known hundreds of them intimately, and there are, of course, many exceptions, but I discovered that the majority of wives who used to come to me for their clothes regarded their husbands simply as someone who paid the bills. They never thought of studying their comfort, or of consulting their wishes, and took every attention for granted. The other side of the picture is that American men having made this state of things obviously like it and see nothing strange in it. They have placed Woman on her throne, and are quite content to worship at her feet.

After the end of my case I returned to London, where I had a great deal to do in preparation for the opening of the new Paris branch of Lucile's. I did not have time to make another trip to the States until the following year, when business took me over in a great hurry.

I booked a passage on the first available boat.
The boat was the *Titanic*.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

A GREAT liner stealing through the vast loneliness of the Atlantic, the sky jewelled with myriads of stars overhead, and a thin little wind blowing cold and ever colder straight from the frozen ice fields, tapping its warning of approaching danger on the cosily shuttered portholes of the cabins, causing the look-out man to strain his eyes anxiously into the gloom. Inside this floating palace warmth, lights and music, the flutter of cards, the hum of voices, the gay lilt of a German valse—the unheeding sounds of a small world bent on pleasure. Then disaster, swift and overwhelming, turning all into darkness and chaos, the laughing voices changed into shuddering wails of despair—a story of horror unparalleled in the annals of the sea.

This description of how I got on the *Titanic* and our subsequent rescue was written in New York, three days after we landed from the *Carpathia*. I wrote it while all the facts were vividly on my mind. I thought it wise to do so, and so it has proved very useful. I have the original document now.

It is only now, after so long, that I can bring myself to look back to that terrible last night on board the doomed *Titanic*. For many years the horror of it all was too fresh and vivid to bear the searchlight of memory. It was as if some part of my brain had been numbed with the shock. I had only to close my eyes to see the rows of lighted portholes of the great ship extinguished slowly row by row, until they sank completely under the black waters, to hear in my ears the hideous clamour that arose, ringing out over the quiet

sea. I remember thinking at the time, fantastically enough, how remote and indifferent the stars seemed. I looked up at them a few minutes later with tear-filled eyes, when all was still again, and thought how many scenes of human agony they must have witnessed, and it came to me then that the life and death of Man were very unimportant things.

I had not meant to sail on the *Titanic*, although urgent business in New York forced me to take the first available boat. To this day I cannot explain the curious reluctance I had when the booking-clerk at the White Star offices said :

“The only berths we have for the next three weeks are on our new liner, the *Titanic*, which will be making her maiden voyage in a day or two.”

“Oh, I should not care to cross on a new ship,” I told him. “I should be nervous.”

He laughed at the idea of it.

“Of all things, I should imagine you could not possibly feel nervous on the *Titanic*,” he answered. “Why the boat is absolutely unsinkable. Her watertight compartments would enable her to weather the fiercest sea ever known, and she is the last word in comfort and luxury. This first voyage is going to make history in ocean travel.”

It was, but not in the way he expected.

In spite of his arguments I refused to book my berth there and then and went home and told my husband of my fears. He laughed at me, but when he realized that I was really in earnest he offered to come with me rather than let me go on the voyage alone. I consented willingly, little knowing that by so doing I was to expose him to a storm of censure and ridicule, that wellnigh broke his heart and ruined his life.

The first days of the crossing were uneventful. Like everyone else I was entranced with the beauty

of the liner. I had never dreamt of travelling in such luxury. I remember being childishly pleased on finding strawberries on my breakfast-table.

"Fancy strawberries in April, and in mid-ocean. The whole thing is positively uncanny," I kept saying to my husband. "Why you would think you were at the Ritz."

My pretty little cabin, with its electric heater and pink curtains, delighted me, so that it was a pleasure to go to bed. Everything aboard this lovely ship reassured me from the captain, with his kindly, bearded face and genial manner, and his twenty-five years of experience as a White Star commander, to my merry, Irish stewardess, with her soft brogue and tales of the timid ladies she had attended during hundreds of Atlantic crossings. And yet, in spite of ridicule nothing could persuade me to completely undress at night, and my warm coat and wrap lay always ready at hand, and my little jewel case, with a few of my most treasured possessions, was placed on a convenient table within my reach. I have never been a psychic woman, and in all my life have never been to a séance or dabbled in the occult, so I am even now loath to call this feeling of acute fear which I experienced a premonition, yet the fact remains that though I have crossed the Atlantic many times both before and since I have never had it on any other occasion. Something warned me, some deep instinct, that all was not well.

The time passed happily enough. I had my secretary, Miss Francatelli, with me, as well as my husband, and we both found several friends on board. Mr. and Mrs. Thayer, the former was President of the Pennsylvania Railway, were among them.

The day of the disaster dawned calm and bright, the sea was exceptionally still, but as the day wore on the cold increased. The wind was the coldest I ever

felt, but it died down towards night. As we walked round the deck I shivered in my warmest furs.

"I have never felt so cold," I said to Cosmo. "Surely there must be icebergs around."

He made fun of my ignorance, and Captain Smith, who happened to be passing, assured me that we were right away from the ice zone.

Miss Francatelli, my secretary, and I went into my cabin and shut up all the portholes and lit the electric stove to try to get warm, but it was no use, and when we all three went down to the restaurant we kept on our thick clothes instead of dressing for dinner.

I remember that last meal on the *Titanic* very well. We had a big vase of beautiful daffodils on the table, which were as fresh as if they had just been picked. Everybody was very gay, and at neighbouring tables people were making bets on the probable time of this record-breaking run. Bruce Ismay, Chairman of the White Star Line, was dining with the ship's doctor next to our table, and I remember that several men appealed to him as to how much longer we should be at sea. Various opinions were put forward, but none dreamed that the *Titanic* would make her harbour that night. Mr. Ismay was most confident, and said that undoubtedly the ship would establish a record.

Further along the room the Wideners and the Thayers (American multi-millionaires both of them) were dining with the Captain and others, and there was a great deal of laughter and chatter from their table. It was the last time I saw them. At another table sat Colonel Jacob Astor and his young bride. They were coming back to New York after a honeymoon in Europe, and I thought how much in love they were—poor things, it was the last few hours they were to have together. They were joined by Isador Strauss, the multi-millionaire and his wife. These

two so openly adored one another that we used to call them "Darby and Joan" on the ship. They told us laughingly that in their long years of married life they had never been separated for one day or night. Their bodies were found hours afterwards clasped in one another's arms, after Mrs. Strauss had hidden from the officers, who were trying to force her into one of the boats.

After dinner we went down into the lounge, where we met Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Meyer. I had my little autograph book with me, and got them to write in it. It was one of the "Confession" books, which were so popular just then. Mr. Meyer filled in his "likes", "abominations", etc., and then came to the column marked "madnesses". He laughed as he said: "I have only one—to live", and wrote it down. In less than two hours after he was drowned.

We went up to our cabins on A deck. Cosmo went to bed early, Miss Francatelli and I sat chatting by the stove before we undressed.

I had been in bed I suppose for about an hour, and the lights were all out, when I was awakened by a funny rumbling noise. It was like nothing I had ever heard before. It seemed almost as if some giant hand had been playing bowls, rolling the great balls along. Then the boat stopped, and immediately there was the frightful noise of escaping steam, and I heard people running along the deck outside my cabin, but they were laughing and gay.

"We must have hit an iceberg," I heard them say. "There is ice on the deck."

I went across the passage to my husband's cabin. He had heard nothing and was very annoyed at my waking him up.

"Don't be so ridiculous," he said. "Even if we have grazed an iceberg it can't do any serious damage with all these water-tight compartments. The worst

that can happen is that it will slow us down. Go back to bed and don't worry."

However I went and looked over the side of the boat. I could see nothing and it was pitch black. Several people hurried up on deck, but on hearing from the ship's officers that it was "nothing but temporary trouble" they went quietly back to bed. I think to this day that if it had not been for this ill-advised reticence hundreds more lives would have been saved. As it was the appalling danger we were in was concealed from us all until it was too late and in the ensuing panic many of the boats were lowered half-filled because there was no time to fill them.

I went back to my cabin. Everything outside appeared as usual, but I was uneasy and the roar of the steam still continued to alarm me. Presently it stopped and there came an infinitely more frightening silence. The engines had stopped. Something in the cessation of this busy, homely sound filled me with panic. I rushed back to Cosmo.

"I beg you to go up on deck and see what has happened," I cried, shaking him.

He got out of his warm bed rather unwillingly. In ten minutes he was back looking rather grave.

"I have just been up on the bridge and seen Colonel Astor," he said. "He told me that he was going to ask his wife to dress, and I think that you had better do the same."

I hurriedly put on the warmest clothes I could find, covering them with a thick coat. As I was dressing, Miss Francatelli came into the room, very agitated.

"There is water in my cabin and they are taking the covers off the lifeboats on deck."

Just as she finished speaking a steward knocked at the door.

"Sorry to alarm you, Madam, but the Captain's orders are that all passengers are to put on lifebelts."

He laughed and joked as he helped us to don them.

"Wrap up warmly, for you may have a little trip for an hour or so in one of the lifeboats," he said.

We followed him out of the cabin. Before the door closed I looked round it for the last time. I shall never forget that glimpse of the lovely, little room, with its beautiful lace quilt, and pink cushions and photographs all round, and with a big basket of lillies of the valley that my "Lucile" girls had given me when I left Paris, on the table. It all looked so homely and pretty, just like a bedroom on land, that it did not seem possible there could be any danger. But as if to give this reassuring thought the lie at that moment a vase of flowers on the washstand slid off suddenly and fell with a crash on the floor.

We looked at one another.

On the port side there was a scene of indescribable horror. Boat after boat was being lowered in a pandemonium of rushing figures fighting for places, tearing at each other, trampling women and children under foot. The Lascars from below deck had run amok and were battling like devils round the remaining boats. Over the confusion the voices of the ship's officers roared.

"Women and children first. Stand back," and I heard the sharp bark of a revolver.

My legs shook so that I could hardly stand, and if it had not been for my husband's arm I should have fallen.

"Come, dear," he said, "I must get you to the boats."

I clung to him with all my strength, and although I could scarcely get out the words, I insisted that nothing on earth would make me leave him. He saw that I meant it, and besides the crowd round the boats

on that deck was so thick that it was useless to try to approach them.

While we stood there people rushed by us in a headlong dash to get anywhere away from the hell of that struggling, yelling mob, and there were heart-rending shrieks as one boat, too hurriedly launched, upset and its occupants were shot out into the black depths of water below.

"We will go round to the starboard side," Cosmo said. "It may be better there. It can't possibly be worse."

It was better, for although there were crowds there was no confusion. The boats were being quietly filled with women, while a number of ship's officers and male passengers helped to launch them. Even in that terrible moment I was filled with wonder at nearly all the American wives who were leaving their husbands without a word of protest or regret, scarce of farewell. They have brought the cult of chivalry to such a pitch in the States that it comes as second nature to their men to sacrifice themselves and to their women to let them do it. But I had no such ideas about my husband, and when two officers came up and tried to force me into one of the boats I refused. Cosmo pleaded with me while three or four boats were launched and the crowds round the side thinned. But I only said :

"Promise me that whatever you do you will not let them separate us," and clung to him until at last seeing it was no use resisting me he gave in, and we stood waiting there with Miss Francatelli, who refused to leave us.

Suddenly we saw that everyone in the vicinity had disappeared, except for some sailors who were launching a little boat. We found out afterwards that it was not a lifeboat, but the Captain's emergency boat. The men who were to man it were all stokers, with the exception of one seaman, whom an officer placed in

charge of it. Seeing nobody else about my husband asked the officer whether we might get into it, and on receiving his permission we were helped in, followed by two American men, who came up at the last moment. I shall never forget how black and deep the water looked below us, and how I hated leaving the big, homely ship for this frail little boat. Just beside us was a man sending off rockets, and the ear-splitting noise added to the horror of being suspended in mid-air while one of the lowering ropes got caught and was only released after what seemed an interminable time.

The officer called out his last instructions to our crew.

"Pull off away from the boat as quickly as possible, at least two hundred yards."

Just as we touched the water I looked back. I could see the man sending off rockets.

We rowed away out into the darkness.

I have often noticed that on the heels of tragedy comes an absurd anticlimax. In my case it was deadly sea-sickness, which was nothing less than torture. To try to keep my mind off my physical sufferings I fixed my eyes on the ship. I could see her dark hull towering like a giant hotel, with light streaming from every cabin porthole. As I looked, one row of these shining windows was suddenly extinguished. I guessed the reason and turned shudderingly away. When I forced myself to look again, yet another row had disappeared. After what seemed long hours of misery a sharp exclamation from my husband aroused me from the stupor into which I was sinking.

"My God ! She is going now !" he cried.

I turned and saw the few remaining lights of the *Titanic* shining with steady brilliance, but only for a moment, and then they were gone. A dull explosion shook the air. From the doomed vessel there arose an

indescribable clamour. I think that it was only at that moment that many of those poor souls on board realized their fate. A louder explosion followed and the stern of the great ship shot upwards out of the water. For a few seconds she stayed motionless while the agonized cries from her decks grew in intensity and then, with one awful downward rush she plunged to her grave through fathoms of water, and the air was rent with those awful shrieks. Then silence, which I felt I could not bear ; I felt my very reason tottering. Cosmo did his best to comfort me, but I lapsed into a sort of unconsciousness, from which I was aroused by a dreadful paroxysm of sea-sickness, which persisted at intervals through the rest of the night.

Between bouts of my horrible sickness I could see the dark shadows of icebergs surrounding us.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

MERCIFULLY there is a limit to the human capacity for suffering. In moments of great shock and sorrow we can only feel so far and then no farther, for the brain seems to become almost paralysed and in place of consecutive thought turns over a medley of trivialities. If it were not so we should find life utterly unendurable.

On that night of horror when we rowed away from the place where we had seen the vast bulk of the *Titanic* sink slowly beneath the sea as though some relentless giant hand had drawn her under, we scarcely spoke to one another. Our ears were too full of those terrible cries of despair from the poor souls she had carried down with her for us to want to break the silence which succeeded them. There was only the splash of the oars as the men rowed harder than ever, seeking perhaps to get away from their thoughts, and now and then a muttered sentence as they strained their eyes into the gloom ahead looking for some sign of the other boats.

But I noticed these things in a hazy, detached sort of way, for I had gone through too much in those two short hours since I left my cabin to think clearly, and to add to it I was enduring agonies from sea-sickness. Now anyone who has ever suffered from this unromantic and very distressing complaint will agree that there are very few things more calculated to destroy one's morale and unfit one for mental effort. While some hundreds of yards away from me men and women were going to their death beneath the icy waters of the Atlantic and one of the most appalling tragedies of a lifetime

was being enacted, I lay stretched out along the side of the boat scarcely conscious of anything but my physical sufferings. Had I been pitched into the sea myself I should not have made the least resistance; in fact death would have been almost in the nature of a relief.

Once or twice during the night I revived a little, and tried to talk to reassure Cosmo, who was very worried on my account, for, as he told me afterwards, I appeared so ill that he feared I might die of exposure before we were rescued. The others followed my example, and when the men rested on their oars for a few minutes we chatted of little unimportant things, as people do when they have been through a great mental strain. With one accord we avoided the tragic side of the wreck, for we could not trust ourselves to speak of it, but we tried to make feeble jokes about our present plight. I remember that I teased Miss Francatelli about the weird assortment of clothes the poor girl had flung on before leaving the ship, for she was generally very fussy over her clothes.

"Just fancy, you actually left your beautiful night-dress behind you!" I said, and we all laughed as though I had said something very witty, though in our hearts we felt very far from laughter.

"Never mind, madam, you were lucky to come away with your lives," said one of the sailors. "Don't you bother about anything you had to leave behind you."

Another voice took up the tale.

"You people need not bother about losing your things, for you can afford to buy new ones when you get ashore. What about us poor fellows? We have lost all our kit, and our pay stops from the moment the ship went down."

For the first time Cosmo came into the conversation.

"Yes, that's hard luck if you like," he said. "But don't worry, you will get another ship. At any rate

I will give you a fiver each towards getting a new kit."

It was said with his characteristic impulsiveness, and I don't think anybody thought much of it at the time, but I remember every word of that conversation, for it had a tremendous bearing on our future. I little thought then that because of those few words we should be disgraced and branded as cowards in every corner of the civilized world.

The awful night wore on while we sat huddled together in the boat, nearly dying of cold. I heard Cosmo, who was sitting behind me, rubbing his hands together to keep them from freezing, and every now and then when the men stopped rowing Miss Franchetti would take their poor numbed hands in her lap and rub them with all her might to try and get a little warmth into them. Soon she, too, was overcome with the cold and lay down in the bottom of the boat. We had nothing to eat, but Cosmo found a few cigars in his pocket and broke them in half and shared them with the men. They had only two matches among them, but somehow they managed to light them, and the smoke was reassuring.

Towards morning the light wind which had died down overnight rose again and the sea began to get very rough; as the first faint streaks of dawn broke, we saw rows of "white horses" racing towards us, beautiful but very alarming, for our frail little boat could never have lived long in a rough sea.

Fortunately we saw something else, or rather I did, for the others refused to believe me at first, when I told them that I could see two lights far away on the horizon, too big and too steady to be stars. They insisted that it was only my imagination, since nobody else in the boat could see anything although they all strained their eyes into the distance. But the lights grew gradually bigger until they resolved themselves

into the outline of an approaching steamer, the *Carpathia*.

By this time it was daylight and the sun was rising. I shall never forget the beauty of that dawn stealing over the cold Atlantic, stretching crimson fingers across the grey of the sky, lighting up the icebergs till they looked giant opals, as we threaded our way past them. The men were rowing now for all they were worth, and one of them began to sing. We were all nearly hysterical with the reaction from our miseries of the night, and as we saw other boats rowing alongside of us we imagined that most of our fellow passengers on the *Titanic* had been saved like us ; not one of us even guessed the appalling truth. As we drew up beside the *Carpathia* the wreck and the dreadful experiences we had gone through seemed to have passed away like a nightmare.

Miss Francatelli and I were so numb with cold that we could not possibly climb the rope ladder which they let down from the ship, and they had some difficulty in getting us up on deck, but it was managed at last, and oh ! the joy of setting foot on the ship. We clung to each other like children too exhausted to speak, only realizing the blessed fact that we were saved.

I can never be grateful enough for the kindness which was shown to us on the *Carpathia* ; from Captain Rostron and Mr. Brown, the Purser, downwards, crew and passengers vied with one another in their attentions to us and to all the other survivors. Everything that could possibly be done for our comfort had been thought of ; preparations had gone on all night since first the ship's wireless picked up the *Titanic*'s message of distress, bakers had been baking bread to feed three thousand, blankets had been heated and passengers had doubled up with strangers anywhere and everywhere to offer their cabins to the survivors.

The moment I stepped on deck a motherly steward-

ess rushed up and flung a warm rug round my shoulders, while another took charge of Miss Francatelli, and we were taken below where we were given brandy and steaming hot coffee and offered changes of clothing.

Cosmo and the two Americans, whose names we found out were Mr. Stengel and Mr. Salaman, were delivered into the care of a steward, who prepared hot baths for them and served them with breakfast.

I felt too ill to eat anything, and after being given a sedative I was put to bed in a beautiful cabin, which two passengers gave over for Cosmo and myself. There I lay for hours in a sort of stupor, too exhausted to rouse myself.

I did not wake until the following morning, when the sun was streaming in through the portholes, and for the moment I completely forgot the events of the last forty-eight hours, and was only surprised at the unfamiliarity of the cabin. Then a stewardess came in with some tea, and on seeing her instead of my Irish stewardess of the *Titanic*, suddenly everything swept over me in a tide of remembrance. I saw the *Titanic* as I had last seen her, plunging to her grave under the Atlantic, I heard again those heart-rending cries from her decks, and burying my face in the pillows I sobbed uncontrollably. It was the first time that the full realization of the disaster came to me.

Later in the morning a kind American woman, who was in the next cabin, came in and helped me to dress and we went on deck together. Here we found numbers of survivors, rescued like ourselves, grouped about the ship, discussing the tragedy. Each of them had some new story of horror to tell, many were nearly distraught with anxiety over the fate of husbands or sons who had been left on the ship, and of whom they could get no tidings.

One of the women I talked to was Mrs. Turrell Cavendish, the daughter of Mr. Henry Siegel. She

was heartbroken over the loss of her husband, who had put her into one of the first boats to leave the wreck, and had then gone back to save other women and children. The boat in which she had escaped had carried twenty-four women and only two sailors to row them. One of these men was so overcome by the cold that he had collapsed in the bottom of the boat, and the women had taken their turns at the oars, and somehow or other managed to get the boat alongside the *Carpathia*. Several of them had been almost frozen during the night, for they were only half dressed and without shoes or stockings.

Another woman told me that one of the sailors in her boat collapsed over his oar. She was sitting quite close to him and had tried to restore him until she realized that he was dead. So she had propped him against her knee, and had sat like that all the remainder of the night, so that the other women in the boat should not be alarmed. A lovely little boy of two years old, the child of very rich American parents, had been brought away by his nurse, who was nearly distracted with grief. The child's mother had refused to leave her husband, and both had gone down with the ship. In another cabin were a mother and her three daughters, hoping against hope for news of the father and two brothers, who had packed them into one of the boats and waved "good-bye" as they stood on the decks to wait for death together.

One of the saddest figures was an elderly woman shabbily dressed with a shawl over her head, who had been landed from one of the boats and dumped down on the first-class deck. She ran hither and thither peering over the sides, ringing her hands and talking and moaning to herself in a language none of us could understand. We tried to speak to her in English, French, German and Italian, but she only shook her head. In the end Captain Rostron saw her and sent

for somebody from the third class who could talk Russian, for he had guessed her nationality: A man and woman came and her joy at finding somebody who understood her was pathetic, although they had little enough comfort to give her, and could only listen to her sad story. She was the only one left of an entire family, which had been emigrating to the States. Her husband, her four children and her brother and his wife and family had all gone down in the *Titanic*.

All that day and for the remainder of the voyage until we arrived in New York the *Carpathia* was a ship of sorrow as nearly all were grieving over the loss of somebody.

There were one or two little comedies which came as a welcome relief. One of them was the escape of the *Titanic*'s baker, who had been extraordinarily lucky. After the iceberg struck the ship he had gone to his cabin and drunk half a bottle of brandy "to steady his nerves". As he set the bottle down the ship gave a dreadful lurch, though he attributed his loss of equilibrium to the effects of the brandy at the time. Then hearing the sound of scurrying feet as the crew rushed up on deck, he decided to follow them. At the door of his cabin he looked back, and the half-finished bottle of brandy caught his eye. It was a pity to waste it on the sea, he thought, so to prevent this happening he drank it himself. When he eventually arrived on deck he was in an optimistic mood and indifferent as to his probable plight, which was fortunate for him as just then the ship settled down at her bows and he, with many hundreds of others, was flung into the icy water. He was not in a state to offer much resistance, and contented himself with swimming mechanically about and keeping himself afloat rather from a subconscious sense of self-preservation than from any consistent effort.

While he was doing this he came upon a raft,

which had been rigged by others of a more energetic frame of mind, and as there was one vacant place he was allowed to climb up on it. By that time he had been in the water for over an hour and was nearly frozen, but after being taken aboard the *Carpathia* he recovered. The doctors who attended him said that without any doubt that whole bottle of brandy had saved his life, for without it he could never have withstood the intense cold of the sea so long. This was one of the very few comedies I ever heard of the loss of the *Titanic*, although I fear it is a story of which temperance advocates will not approve.

On our second day on the *Carpathia* Cosmo and I were discussing our terrible night in the boat when he said suddenly :

“Oh, by the way, I must not forget that I promised those poor fellows a fiver each towards getting a new kit if ever we were saved. I shall write them cheques and give them to them to-morrow.”

“Yes, indeed they deserve it for the way they kept their courage up,” I answered. “I am going to ask them all to write their names on my lifebelt before we get ashore, for I should like to keep it in memory of our wonderful escape.”

So Cosmo sent for Hendrickson, the fireman to whom he had first promised the money “to go towards a new kit” in the boat that night, and asked him to let him have a list of the men who had manned the boat, and later he came back to me with it.

“Just imagine, there was only one seaman, Symons, who was in charge of the boat, among them,” he said to me as we looked at the list. “All the rest were firemen.”

He sent for Miss Francatelli, and, as he had no cheque book with him, she wrote out cheques on half-sheets of notepaper which Cosmo signed. The purser, Mr. Brown, supplied stamps.

Then Cosmo sent for the men and they came up on the promenade deck, where an informal little presentation took place. All the passengers who were there cheered as the men came forward rather sheepishly to receive the envelopes containing the cheques, and the ship's doctor, who was interested in photography, took a picture of them all. Then they came to say "good-bye" to me and wrote their names on my lifebelt . . . "Symonds, Hendrickson, Taylor, Collins, Pusey, Sheath and Horswill."

I have kept it ever since.

As we went back to our cabin I said to Cosmo :

"You know I think some of the other survivors might have done the same thing for the men in their boats, and raised a collection among themselves. Of course one could not expect the third class passengers to do it, but the first and second class could well afford it, and it would have been only a very little thing to do for these men who have lost far more by being shipwrecked than we have."

Cosmo agreed with me. "At all events I don't regret having done it," he said. "Probably the others did not think of it."

Neither of us could have guessed that that simple little act of kindness was forging a powerful link in the chain of evidence which was to be used with such deadly force against us.

I shall never forget the night of our arrival in New York, nor, I think, will anyone else who was aboard the *Carpathia* and witnessed the harrowing scenes at the Cunard Line pier, where ten thousand men and women had waited for over two hours in a drizzling rain for news of friends and relatives who had been passengers on the *Titanic*. Before the ship anchored we caught glimpses of white anxious faces and desperate eyes scanning our decks, as the vast crowd waited silently. Woman wrapped in costly furs and million-

aires who had driven up in luxurious cars stood shoulder to shoulder with men and women from the slums, allied in a common sorrow, hoping the same forlorn hope that perhaps there had been some mistake after all, that perhaps the wireless's list of survivors' names had been incomplete. Most of the women were crying and the men stared straight ahead with set, white faces.

In one little group I recognized Elsie de Wolfe, Miss Marbury, Bainbridge Colby and Mr. Merritt, the editor of the *Sunday American*. A few minutes later we were down the gangway and they were alternately laughing and crying over us. Only then did I begin to realize the agony of mind they had been in while they waited for us for two hours. They had only been told we were among the survivors and had had no confirmation of the news to depend on, and all those who were waiting for friends had been in terrible suspense when it became known that many of the people who had been rescued had died aboard the *Carpathia*. Nobody had dared to do more than hope for the best until they had actually seen the passengers disembarked.

We drove to the Ritz, where we found a suite of rooms had been prepared for us. Elsie had filled them with flowers, and there were new clothes laid out for us. At dinner that night we were all very gay, and drank champagne. Every few minutes the telephone would ring, and I was kept busy answering the messages of congratulation, while flowers and other presents were showered upon us. But I could not be quite happy even in the warmth of our welcome, for I kept remembering those other men and women who had sat at dinner that last night on board the *Titanic*. It all seemed so long ago. I could scarcely believe that only four days had passed.

It was to escape from my thoughts that I flung

myself with renewed energy into my work. I shut myself up in my studio and spent the whole day there, refusing to see anyone.

But I was not to be left in peace. About three days after our arrival in New York the first thunder-clouds of the storm which was to break over our heads later gathered up.

The most extraordinary reports began to be circulated about the wreck of the *Titanic*, and as these passed from one to another they were magnified into fantastic stories without a shred of truth. The horror and grief which had shaken the whole American nation resolved itself into a sort of hysteria. Everyone looked for a victim to blame for the tragedy, and class hatred ran high. The wildest rumours as to "the scandalous conduct" of the "millionaires" who had been passengers on the ship were put about, and these were sedulously fanned by the agitators. The names of men who had been drowned were heaped with the vilest abuse, they were proclaimed far and wide as cowards, and in some cases their relatives were booed and shouted at in the streets. Nobody knew exactly how these rumours started but they gained currency none the less.

It was said that Colonel Astor and George Widener had been shot aboard the *Titanic* while fighting with women to get into the lifeboats ; that a boatful of women had been turned out to make room for the pet dogs and luggage of Mrs. Astor ; that any steerage passengers who had been saved had forced themselves on deck as Captain Smith and his officers had given orders that only first and second class passengers were to be allowed to get into the boats ; that the hatches had been fastened down on the third class compartments. It was said that Captain Smith had been attending a noisy dinner party on the night of the accident and that he was so drunk that he was unable to take any part

in the control of the ship ; that the first officer had shot himself on the bridge ; and that practically every man among the first class passengers had tried to stampede for the boats, trampling women and children under foot.

I need not say how false these rumours were. Everybody knows now that Colonel Astor and George Widener died as did the rest of the men who went down with the ship, like brave men, having helped to load the boats with women and children ; the memory of Captain Smith has been too abundantly established as a sailor and a gentleman to need any comment from me, and it is known that the proportion of third class passengers saved was actually higher than the proportion of first class.

The majority of the rumours were directed against Bruce Ismay, Managing Director of the White Star Line. It was stated that he was directly responsible for the accident, since he had caused the *Titanic* to deviate from her proper course. His picture was published all over the States with the caption that this was the man "who so managed and directed the line that the *Titanic* disregarded all warnings, neglected all precautions, drove headlong into a known and definitely located sea of ice, killing thirteen hundred heroic men, while he, himself a coward, escaped in the lifeboats with the women and children, leaving some helpless woman in his place, to drown."

Of course we heard all these reports—it was difficult not to, for the papers were full of them—but we never connected them in any way with ourselves.

Then one morning we received a newspaper cutting which was sent by a friend, who felt that we ought to defend ourselves from the terrible accusations which were being made against us and of which we had so far heard nothing. It was the account of an interview

which a certain Robert Hopkins, a seaman of the *Titanic*, had given to the Press. It had already appeared in several papers, we were told.

This man, Robert Hopkins, had stated that he could throw some light on the mystery of the "millionaires' boat" (we had already read amazing stories of this boat, but had no idea they referred to us), which had been the first to leave the ship. It was occupied, he stated, by Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, Lady Duff Gordon and eleven others, only two of whom were women. A man, whom Hopkins asserted was an American millionaire, had promised the boat's crew to "make it all right with them" if they "would get right away from the ship", which they did. Each member of the crew, concluded Hopkins, received a cheque for £5 upon Coutts' Bank when they were taken aboard the *Carpathia*.

Naturally this story loosed the whole of "the Yellow Press" upon us, and every day the papers had some new addition to make. Hopkins was interviewed again, and further drew on his inventive powers, the other seamen were asked to give their version, and our fellow passengers also made statements, which completely cleared Cosmo and should have put an end to the story then and there. All the men of our boat's crew indignantly denied the statement which Hopkins had made, and explained the real circumstances in which the cheques had been promised. Hopkins, who had been in another boat, could not possibly have known what had transpired in ours, but hearing of the presentation of the cheques on board the *Carpathia* he had put his own interpretation on the incident.

At first we were inclined to take no notice of the scurrilous attacks which were being made on us in New York.

"It is such a ridiculous story that it cannot do us

any real harm," Cosmo said. "Nobody will believe a thing like that."

But a lie that has a grain of truth in it is very difficult to refute. It was an undeniable fact that Cosmo had given each man in our boat a present of £5 towards a new kit, though from a very different motive from the one imputed to him.

Then Mr. Tweedie, our lawyer and our very good friend, wired us from London that the stories which had appeared in certain American papers were being quoted in London. He advised us to return immediately and to insist on being present at the Board of Trade Inquiry on the loss of the *Titanic*, so that we might have a chance of personally refuting the abominable libels which were being circulated about us.

So although I had intended to stay several weeks in New York we sailed on the *Lusitania* on May 7th.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MANY years ago I promised my husband that one day I would tell the true story of the most tragic chapter in our lives and vindicate his honour, yet it is only now, after his death, that I am able to do so. For myself I would have been content enough to let it rest, for I do not altogether believe in uncovering old hurts, but he would have wished me to do it, and I owe it to the memory of one who was in every respect the bravest and most honourable of men.

I suppose that the most terrible thing that can happen to a man is for him to be accused of cowardice, for however unjust the accusation may have been it leaves a stain which can never be wiped out, at least in his lifetime, for we are more charitable in our judgment of the dead.

Now a man can be accused of all sorts of things and get away with them, and without losing the respect of other men, but call him a coward and you get back to something primitive, and his own kind will turn on him and make him feel it for the rest of his life. At least that is what happened in my husband's case. He never lived down the shame of the charges that were brought against him, and from that time he became a changed man. He never spoke much about it, but I know that his heart was broken.

I shall never forget his stricken face when we landed from the *Lusitania* and caught the boat train for London. All over the station were newspaper placards. . . . "Duff Gordon Scandal" . . . "Cowardly Baronet and his Wife who Rowed Away From the Drowning" . . . "Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon

Safe and Sound While Women Go Down in the *Titanic*" . . . Newsboys ran by us shouting, "Read about the *Titanic* cowards!"

My son-in-law, Lord Tiverton, met us, and his loyalty was a great comfort to us both, but he looked rather grave when he spoke of the Court of Inquiry.

"You will have to give evidence," he told us. "It is only fair that you should. You must have a chance of showing how false these abominable stories are. Of course Esmé and I knew that there was not a shade of foundation in them, but they have given rise to a lot of nasty gossip."

So we made the journey back to London feeling wretchedly dispirited. At the house in Lennox Gardens we found a stack of letters and telegrams waiting for us. Most of them were from old friends who were furiously indignant at the stories that had been circulated, and wanted to assure us of their sympathy. Others were from complete strangers who had read of the case in the papers. These were generally written in the most abusive strain. Some contained offers of advice, more or less practical. Mrs. Asquith wrote to tell me that she would be present at the Court of Inquiry every day, and that she was sure I would come out of the ordeal with flying colours. She advised me to take a stiff dose of brandy "to buck me up", hardly a wise suggestion as a preparation for the witness box, but fortunately I did not act on it.

I never realized until the day I attended the Court how absolutely alone we all of us are in our moments of sorrow. The Scottish Hall in Buckingham Gate, where it was held, was so crowded that there was scarcely a vacant place anywhere. Looking at them all as I went in I recognized many who had regarded themselves as my intimate friends, yet it came to me that they were rather enjoying the novelty of seeing

two people standing in a moral pillory, watching for us to make some slip in our evidence.

Now looking back on it after all these years I think that the real cause of the storm which raged round us was that public opinion had to be offered some sacrifice. In the squabble as to whether the Duff Gordons had or had not acted in a cowardly manner the real issue of the Inquiry was very much obscured, at least from the point of view of the man in the street.

Nobody can doubt that the wreck of the *Titanic* was, as the verdict of the Court of Inquiry described it, "an act of God", but equally nobody can deny that had the ship been better equipped in the way of life-boats, and better organized in the manning of them, far more lives would have been saved. I am writing simply from the point of view of a passenger without technical knowledge of the control of a ship, but I think that the tragic reticence on the part of the ship's officers, which kept the majority of the passengers in ignorance of the probable fate of the *Titanic* and so lost valuable time in which every boat could have been filled to its utmost capacity without confusion, was responsible for unnecessary loss of life.

I do not for a moment suggest that anyone was to blame for this. It is very easy to be wise after an emergency, and say what ought, or ought not, to have been done. What actually happened at the time was that nobody believed this magnificent boat, the "unsinkable *Titanic*" as she had been proclaimed far and wide, could possibly go down. They trusted in her wonderful construction, her powerful pumps and her watertight compartments, and but for one of those strange coincidences that sometimes happen in moments of tragedy, when it seems that Fate takes a hand in the game and sweeps our cards off the table, they would have been justified.

The real tragedy of the wreck was that there was

no need for a single life to have been lost in the *Titanic*, for the Leyland liner, *Californian*, was only seventeen miles away when the *Titanic* was struck, and she could have taken on board every man, woman and child long before the ship sank—but the *Californian*'s wireless was incapacitated, and she was deaf to the frantic calls for help so near to her.

Then again had the *Titanic* struck the iceberg in almost any other fashion than the one in which she did strike it, her water-tight compartments would have saved her. But she struck twice, each time on a bulkhead, knocking four compartments into one, the fine razor-like surface of the ice cutting its way through steel plating as though it had been so much paper.

But although there was no blame to attach to any one for one of the most appalling tragedies of the sea, there had to be some outlet for the public's emotion, and so the same thing happened in England as in America.

The Duff Gordons were known to have escaped in a boat which contained their secretary, two American gentlemen and seven sailors—therefore everybody immediately assumed that the story of their escape was a story of the most flagrant cowardice, and with one accord heaped mud upon the Duff Gordons.

Lord Mersey, the President of the Court, repeatedly emphasized the fact that "the Duff Gordon incident" had only a small bearing on the Inquiry, but this fact was completely lost sight of by the general public who apparently were disposed to regard us as criminals on trial. The spectacle of two people who had just come through the frightful ordeal of the wreck facing an infinitely worse ordeal was one that appealed to the popular imagination, and they flocked to the Court to appreciate it to the full.

The charge we had to face was a moral one. We could have incurred no legal penalties, nothing would

have been demanded of us had it been proved, but the real issue at stake was to both of us at least infinitely more serious. As one of the papers put it: "The audience were not to be cheated out of the smallest particle of what has become the scandal of the day in England. . . ." It was a terrible spectacle, this man of old family, battling pale-faced, almost pleading, for something still dearer than life, fighting for honour and repute.

The accusation which was actually brought against us was one of incredible cowardice. It was based entirely on the statement of one man among our boat's crew, Charles Hendrickson, a Scandinavian fireman. Hendrickson stated that after the *Titanic* went down he had been the only man in the boat who had wanted to return to the spot to try to pick up survivors, but that all the others had overruled him with their objections. I had been the one to offer the most resistance, he said, for I had protested that there was too great a danger of our being swamped, and that Cosmo had upheld my objections.

This story coupled with the one which Hopkins had spread in America of the £5 bribe was as terrible as it was untrue. Hendrickson admitted, as did all the men of the boat's crew, that there had been no foundation whatever in the story of the £5 bribe, and the explanation which he gave of the cheques was the correct one—that they had been offered as a voluntary contribution towards a new kit for each man, and that the offer had been made in the boat long after the sinking of the *Titanic*. But, even so, the story had persisted and it was only after we had both been through a searching cross-examination on the question of the cheques and the other witnesses had also given their evidence that we were completely cleared.

It was a lovely spring day, I remember, as we drove to the Court, and it was difficult to believe that

we were not going to some pleasant social function, for there were such rows of cars outside. Inside the room, too, there was little of the atmosphere of a court, in spite of the imposing array of counsel. All the women there seemed to have put on their prettiest spring frocks. I caught sight of the Duchess of Wellington and Lady Eileen Wellesley, Margot Asquith, whose bright eyes followed every posture of the witnesses, Prince Maurice of Battenberg, Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, the Russian Ambassador, and many other people who had been guests at our house ; eager all of them to see what would happen.

As Cosmo stood up to give his evidence I thought suddenly that a court of law can sometimes be a substitute for the arena of the old world. Once or twice I closed my eyes and tried to imagine I was far away from it all. When I opened them again I saw Lord Mersey and the row of counsel through a haze.

Sir Rufus Isaacs, the Attorney General, led for the Board of Trade. With him were Sir John Simon, Mr. Butler Aspinall, Mr. S. A. Rowlatt and Mr. Raymond Asquith.

Sir Robert Finlay, Mr. F. Laing, Mr. Maurice Hill, and Mr. Norman Raeburn appeared for the White Star Line, and there were many more whose names I cannot remember.

Mr. H. E. Duke, who is now Lord Merrivale, and Mr. Vaughan Williams, who were appearing for us, looked a very small army against so many who were appearing against us, I thought dismally.

Our only defence was a complete denial of Hendrickson's story. There had, of course, been no such conversation in the boat, certainly none in which we took part. Nobody had suggested going back to rescue possible survivors because we were at far too great a distance from the ship when she went down to be able to do so. When the *Titanic* disappeared

beneath the sea we were left in our frail little emergency boat without a light of any sort, without even a compass and with no means of even knowing where to search for the people in the water. Miss Francatelli and I had been the only women in the boat simply because we had been the only women left standing on the starboard deck when she was launched. My husband and the two American men had only got into the boat because there was no one else there to do so and the officer superintending the loading of the boats had given them permission to get in. The crew of seven men had been appointed to man the boat by this officer and had acted on his instructions in pulling well away from the ship.

When the *Titanic* sank I was too seasick to have taken part in a discussion as to which direction we ought to follow even if I had wanted to do so, and Cosmo, who had only been a passenger in the boat, had left the entire navigation to Symons, the seaman, whom the officer had placed in charge of her.

Symons in the course of his evidence stated on oath that he considered to have returned to the place where the *Titanic* had sunk would have endangered the safety of all on board, as we should have more than probably been swamped. He also affirmed that there had been no discussion whatever in the boat as to the advisability of returning, and that neither Sir Cosmo nor I had made any suggestions on the point whatever. The story that we had deliberately rowed away and left the drowning to their fate was monstrous.

For over two hours Cosmo was cross-examined by Sir Rufus Isaacs whilst the crowd of spectators lent forward anxious not to miss one syllable of the dialogue. Once when Sir Rufus Isaacs lowered his voice Margot Asquith called out impatiently, "Speak up", and other women echoed her. Several times there were bursts of applause, once especially, and Lord Mersey inter-

vened to rule out a question put by another opposing counsel, Mr. Harbinson.

Sir Rufus Isaacs was absolutely relentless in the way he pressed his questions ; he was, in fact, thought extremely severe to my husband, as were several of the other counsel, and their attitude evoked a great deal of criticism afterwards when we were dismissed from the case, Lord Mersey having announced that he proposed to take no notice whatever of the charge against Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon.

Mr. Ashmead Bartlett in an article which was published in *The Academy* under the title “Inquiry or Star Chamber ?” voiced, I think, the general opinion.

He wrote : “Every fair-minded person must deplore what passed at the proceedings of the *Titanic* Court of Inquiry last week. The Court was constituted by the Board of Trade, acting under pressure of public opinion, to inquire into the causes which brought about the disaster of the *Titanic* and the resulting heavy loss of life. It was surely never intended that it should resolve itself into a species of Court of Star Chamber to torture witnesses who were fortunate enough to survive, and to cast the gravest reflections on their characters and conduct during those two tragic hours which elapsed after the *Titanic* received her death wound. Still less was the Court constituted that efforts might be made to stir up class against class in order to prove that undue preference was shown to the aristocrat and the wealthy. Yet almost the whole of last week’s evidence was taken up in endeavouring to prove, both by counsel on behalf of the Crown and by various other counsel representing Seamen’s Unions, Stokers’ Unions and third class passengers, that Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff Gordon were responsible for the fact that No. 1 lifeboat only contained twelve persons instead of its full complement. . . .

“Torquemada never placed his victims more unfairly on the rack of the Inquisition than have Sir Cosmo and Lady Duff Gordon been placed on the rack of cross-examination. Every counsel, from the Attorney-General, Sir Rufus Isaacs (from whom one at least expected some semblance of fair play), to Mr. Harbinson, who put the climax on the proceedings by his scandalous question, has endeavoured to prove by the most skilful cross-questioning, by *suggestio falsi*, and by every other weapon in the armoury of the skilled cross-examiner, that Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon induced the crew of No. 1 lifeboat to row away from the sinking ship by offering them £5 apiece. There is not one tittle of evidence to support this derogatory aspersion. . . . Hendrickson’s evidence of this imaginary conversation is not supported by a single other person in the boat . . . Able-Seaman Symons, who was in charge of the boat, assumed full responsibility for all that occurred, and declared on oath that in his considered opinion it would have been most dangerous to have ventured among the drowning multitude, and that he refrained from doing so in order to preserve the lives of those on board.”

On the subject of the £5 cheques Mr. Ashmead Bartlett continues: “Sir Cosmo, taking compassion on the unfortunate plight of these men, who had lost everything they possessed in the world, offered them £5 apiece with which to purchase immediate necessities. Was there ever a more natural action for a gentleman to take? Would not anyone who had been almost miraculously preserved from a fate which had overwhelmed so many have adopted the same course? Yet on account of this harmless act of gratitude and charity Sir Cosmo has been held up to public vilification, and every unworthy motive has been attributed to him. But all efforts of counsel have failed to prove that either Sir Cosmo or Lady Duff Gordon ever said

a single word against going back, or that they attempted to induce the crew to row away from the scene of the disaster by offering them a monetary reward. . . .

"The scene in the Court on Friday will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. There did not seem to be a single common-sense man of the world with any idea of fair play in court. Not one of the eminent K.C.s seemed to grasp the vast and essential difference between men's actions in the time of great emergency and as they appear weeks afterwards at a Court of Inquiry, when the danger is past and the setting is absolutely different. . . . It was not an inspiring spectacle to watch that row of lawyers increasing the sufferings of those who have just passed through the most awful ordeal which a man or woman can be called upon to face."

I was immensely grateful to Mr. Ashmead Bartlett for his warm championship of our cause at that time, and I am still. Other writers were not so kind. Bernard Shaw indulged his biting sarcasm at our expense. Referring to the cry of "Women and Children First", which he described as a "romantic formula", he wrote :

"And never did the chorus of solemn delight at the strict observance of this formula by the British heroes on board the *Titanic* rise to sublimer strains than in the papers containing the first account of the wreck by a surviving witness, Lady Duff Gordon. She described how she escaped in the captain's boat, there was one other woman in it and ten men, twelve all told. Chorus : Not once or twice in our rough island story, etc., etc."

Someone cut this out and sent it to me. It hurt me and I was childishly pleased when the article was replied to by Mr. Benedict Ginsburg, who wrote equally bitterly :

"For the sake of modern literature and especially the twentieth century drama I cordially trust that

the Mr. Shaw who signs this article is not the playwright of the same name. . . . Mr. Shaw must now be sorry that in his anxiety to be smart at other people's expense he failed to observe another old formula, 'Do not write of a matter while it is still sub judice'. Had he regarded that he would have waited and would have known something about the authenticity of Lady Duff Gordon's observations and also why there were ten men to two women in that particular boat."

T. P. O'Connor wrote with his usual kindness and tolerance :

"In the case of the Duff Gordons. At first the story told against them was ghastly ; it was that Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon promised a number of sailors a £5 note each before they left the sinking *Titanic* and that they had secured preferential treatment by an appeal to greed. If the story had been true one might well stand aghast at such selfishness. It is now distinctly proved that there was not a word of truth in the story."

But in spite of our complete vindication before the Court of Inquiry, and the generous championship we got from the Press, a great deal of the mud which was flung stuck to us both. For years afterwards I was quite used to hearing people who did not know me whisper :

"That is Lady Duff Gordon, the woman who rowed away from the drowning."

For myself I did not mind, for none of the people whose opinion I cared about believed such an outrageous story, but I minded very much for Cosmo's sake. To the end of his life he grieved at the slur which had been cast on his honour.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

I OFTEN wonder how I ever had the audacity to open a branch in Paris, I, an Englishwoman, with a staff two-thirds English, English mannequins and English clothes. But I was still young enough in those days to see life as a game and the more opposition I met with the more I enjoyed it. The idea of invading the very temple of fashion and setting up my altar there appealed to me enormously.

Just imagine it: here was I, coming over from England, one of the race of women whom the French had dubbed "the worst dressed in Europe", the women who wore clumsy shoes, had their waists in the wrong place and were convex where they ought to be concave (that was the average Frenchman's conception of us in those days), coming to show Parisians how they ought to dress! The ateliers of the high priests and high priestesses of Fashion in the Rue de la Paix were stirred to their very foundations at the bare rumour of it. Waxed moustaches quivered with wrath, and ample satin-clad bosoms heaved with indignation at the impertinence of this interloper from across the Channel.

"Never mind," they said, "Paris will teach her a lesson."

But instead it was I who taught Paris a lesson. I made her open one drowsy, beautiful eye just a little wider. I made her think more kindly of English-women and English figures and English beauty. I made her take my mannequins to her impressionable, eternally romantic heart; I made her follow the fashions I set, and I made her do a dozen other things.

And it all came about like this . . .

It was actually Prince Alexander of Battenberg who gave me the idea of going over to Paris and opening a branch there, to challenge the French dress-makers on their own field. The Prince (it was in the days before the War, and consequently before he took the title of Lord Carisbrooke) was a frequent visitor to the house which Cosmo and I had taken in Lennox Gardens. He was a very simple and lovable person, as he is now, and had a great dislike for formalities. He generally came in for supper every Sunday night, "to take pot-luck" with us, and he used to be quite annoyed if we made any special preparation for him. Very often he would sing to us, for he is passionately fond of music and has a tenor voice of really lovely quality, although it is many years since I last heard him sing. Sometimes he would read aloud, which he did exceedingly well. Hichens was his favourite author and I shall always associate "The Garden of Allah" with his reading of it on those Sunday evenings.

He was a very quiet young man in those days, probably because of his upbringing. Queen Victoria, he told me, had shadowed the whole of his childhood and that of his sister, the Queen of Spain. They had both been intensely lonely, for the Queen had grudged every hour her favourite daughter had spent in anyone's company but her own, and Princess Beatrice was not allowed to devote the time to her children which she would have liked. The Queen had the very human little foible of jealousy where her love for her daughter was concerned, and although she was fond of her grandchildren, she never managed to overcome it. So the four children were left mostly to the care of nurses, while Princess Beatrice was torn both ways, wanting to be with her children, but fearing to hurt the mother who had gone through so much sorrow in her life.

The little boys and girl had hated the time at Windsor most of all, for their nurse had stuffed their poor little heads with horrible bogey tales of the ghost in the Castle, and they had often gone to bed shaking with terror, but too much in awe of their grandmother to confess it. The Queen with her rigid views of disciplining children would have had no sympathy with their superstitious fears, and they all dreaded her anger far more than a possible encounter with the ghost.

One evening, after Prince Alexander had been singing some old French songs to us, the conversation turned on Paris, and I said how much I should like to live there. Suddenly he said, more to tease me than for any other reason :

“The next thing is you will be going over there and starting another Lucile, and cutting out the French shops.”

“That’s just what I should love to do !” I exclaimed. “It would be such fun to have the first English dress-maker’s in Paris, and carry the war right into the enemies’ camp. They have been sending us their models for a century or more. It is time we took them some of ours for a change. I am going to do it.”

All my life I have made my decisions suddenly. I have sometimes regretted them afterwards, but I have never gone back on them. The next morning I took the train for Paris.

I stayed at the Ritz, and the first thing I did was to invite some of my Parisian friends to lunch. Over the coffee I sounded them on the subject of opening a Paris branch. As I had half expected they threw a douche of cold water over my enthusiasm. They were aghast at my audacity. For an English dress-maker to think of entering into competition with Paris their surprise was hardly flattering. Why all the world knew that nobody but a Frenchwoman



MY MOTHER, NIECE, AND MYSELF
at the "1912" Ball at the Albert Hall in 1912

knew how to dress . . . who would I sell my models to? . . . no Parisian would ever buy them . . . I should lose all my capital in such a ridiculous venture . . . and much more of it in the same strain.

But I was not to be deterred. I had meant to go steadily ahead with my scheme, and did so, in the teeth of their advice. I took a wonderful old Empire house in the Rue de Penthièvres, and metaphorically ran up the English flag.

Paris shrugged its dainty shoulders, the Rue de la Paix was slightly ruffled; I was caricatured at the theatres, and in the papers there were grotesque sketches of me with an absurd train of flat-chested, large-footed *Anglaises*, arriving to conquer Paris.

I did not worry about it. I had confidence in myself, I knew that I could convert Paris as I had converted New York, and I was far too busy getting the house ready for us to listen to what the Rue de la Paix was saying about me. There was an enormous lot of work to do, for the house, lovely as it was, was in a dreadful state of neglect. Cobwebs were over everything, all the paint had worn off, and it had to be redecorated from attic to cellar. I shall always remember the disapproving face of my English maid when I showed it to her.

"Empire, did you say it was?" she asked. "Well, all I can say is the Emperor must have been a very dirty fellow!"

On my first tour of inspection of the whole house I climbed right to the top story. It appeared deserted except for the combined rubbish of three previous tenants which was left in untidy piles; cardboard boxes, waste papers, old clothes littered the passage. Then at the far corner I opened a door and came upon a little old woman. She started to her feet when she saw me, and looked utterly terrified. The agent who was taking me round explained that she would be

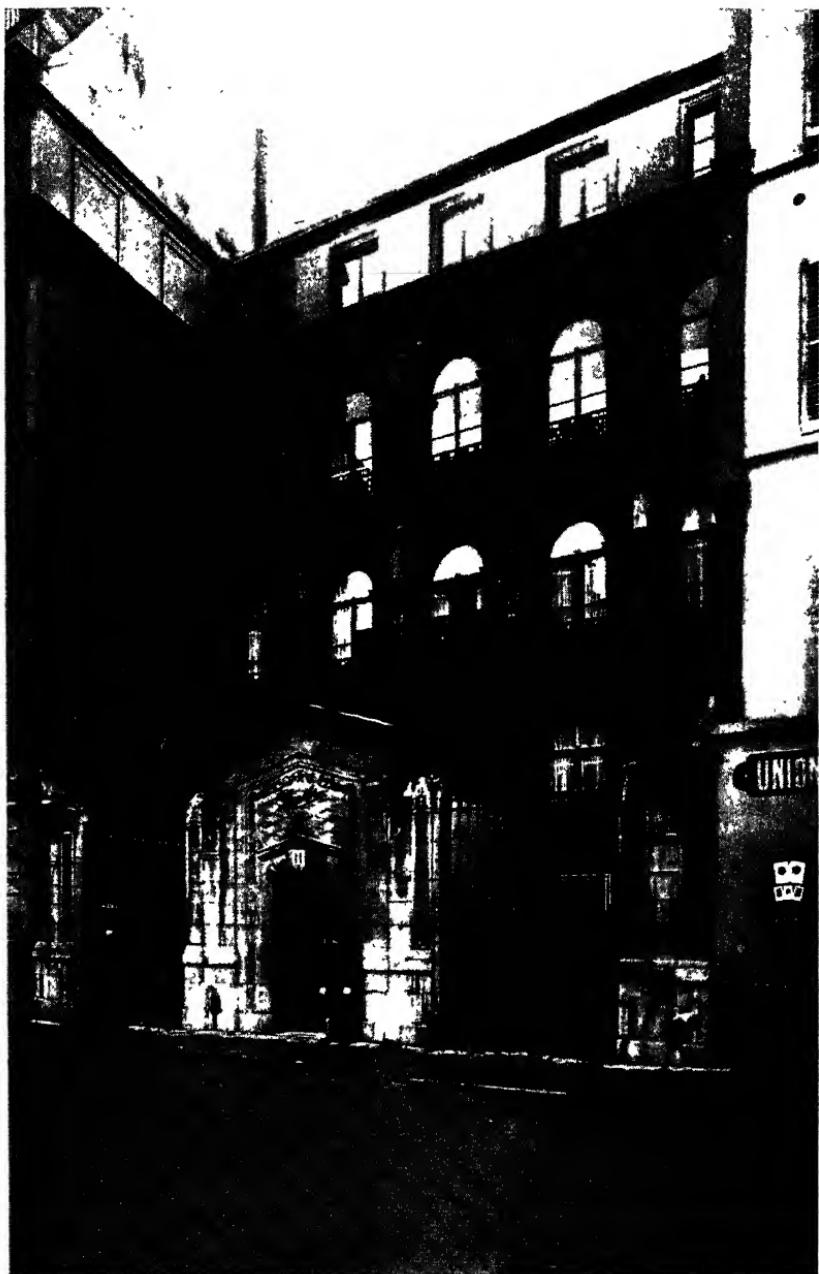
evicted immediately. When she heard this (we had spoken in French), the poor old soul burst out crying and shuffling over to me she seized my hand and implored me piteously to let her remain in the house.

"It is the only home I have ever known," she sobbed. "Do not let them turn me out of it. I shall not live long to trouble you. *Pour l'amour de Dieu*, let me stay!"

Of course I let her stay, for she was in nobody's way up in her little room on the sixth floor, and nothing would have induced me to deprive her of it. I have never seen anything so pathetic as her gratitude. Her face, in spite of its wrinkles, became almost beautiful, as she walked round the room she had thought she would have to leave, touching each beloved article of furniture as though to reassure herself that it was still there. I realized then what a contrast this one poor little room was to the rest of the house. Its furniture was worn and threadbare, but it was scrupulously clean, and the bed linen had been carefully washed and mended.

After that I often visited *Grandmère* as we used to call her, and I heard her story. She was nearly ninety years old, and had originally come to the house as a pretty girl of eighteen from her home in Normandy to be a nursemaid to the family who had then occupied it. She had nursed three generations of children, and built her whole life round theirs. But she had outlived them, and when eventually the family died out the house had been sold. The new landlord, a kind man, had let her remain in her tiny room, and her wants were so small that the few francs a week which he had allowed her for cleaning his suite of offices on the first floor had kept her in food. Her one fear had been that when he let it she would be turned out and sent to the *asile*.

She remained in possession of her little room until she died some years later, and soon became a great



"LUCILE'S" HOUSE AT 11 RUE DE PENTHIEVRES
where I had such a big success with my English fashions and Mannequins,
started 1911

favourite with the girls. They used to run up and down stairs to see that she was all right, and often they would give her a remnant of silk to make a cap for herself. In return she used to fuss over them, make tea and do all sorts of little odd jobs, and when she died the poor old lady left me her most cherished possession, the big crucifix she had brought all the way from her home in Normandy seventy-five years before.

Knowing the Parisian temperament I decided to have more colourful decorations in the house in the Rue de Penthièvres than in Hanover Square, and I had the broad staircase leading up to the showroom carpeted in purple. On the opening day I had them banked with flowers ; the guests might have been attending a wedding reception rather than a dress show, which was precisely the atmosphere I wanted to create. So I filled my rooms with lilac, roses and carnations, and served tea and iced coffee and little cakes, and I engaged the best orchestra in Paris.

On the day of my first mannequin parade, and for every day that week, the Rue de Penthièvres was a solid mass of luxurious cars. Nobody could attempt to drive right up to the door, for the traffic was two and three deep ; extra police were called out to regulate it. The mauve invitation cards, which the guests carried, brightened the sober old street.

Paris had never seen such a thing, a crowd of eight hundred people, famous actresses, more famous courtesans, women of title, women of fashion, with a good sprinkling of equally famous men, artists, men of letters, diplomats, all waiting to get into a mannequin parade.

Paris began to wonder, Paris began to be intrigued. There must surely be something worth seeing in the grey old Rue de Penthièvres. Paris wanted to find out for herself, and so, long after the flowers of the

opening day had faded and the little cakes had all been eaten, men and women continued to walk up the purple carpeted stairs, famous actresses and society women, men of letters and diplomats. The women came again because they wanted to see the dresses and the men came again because they wanted to see Hebe and Gamela and Dolores. And meantime the orders poured in and Paris stopped laughing in its embroidered sleeve, and the Rue de la Paix stopped making jokes about *l'Anglaise* who was coming over to show Paris how hideous English clothes could be, and set itself with renewed zeal to lure the sheep who had strayed into the Rue de Penthièvres back to the fold.

Paris had adopted me, Paris with her generous warm-heartedness had seen in me an artist worthy of her protection. My first season there had established me as one of the little coterie, one of the makers of modes by whose dictates the world of fashion is ruled. My models were looked for at all the races, everyone wanted to see what Lucile was creating. Before I had been there many months I had made one or two arbitrary moves.

One of them was a revolution for which I think all the present generation of women ought to be grateful to me. I was the first designer to abolish the high-boned collar, that ugly and most uncomfortable atrocity which was then disfiguring the neck of every woman who wore it. No woman who has not worn one can possibly imagine how horrible it was to have one's throat scarred by sharp collar supports made of either whalebone or steel, which ran into one with every movement, so that the head had to be kept rigidly in a most unnatural position. There was never a fashion which was more of a menace to beauty, for not only was the skin spoilt by being permanently encased so that it could get no air, but a double chin nearly always appeared at an early age.

When I arrived in Paris every good Parisienne was encased to the ears in a collar of net or chiffon, heavily boned, and they all looked rather askance at the beautifully rounded and untrammelled throats of my mannequins, but before long I was sufficiently an accepted fact to be taken seriously and followed. They came to choose their new dresses, found the low necks on all of them, demurred a bit . . . I quoted Sir Joshua Reynolds as my authority for beauty, extolled the loveliness of a woman's neck in glowing terms . . . they gave in, tried the experiment of a low collar . . . and never wore anything else from that day. Triumphantly I launched "the Quaker Girl collar" and "the Peter Pan neck" and saw each in turn become the rage.

Another innovation I brought in, though this was a folly, an extravagance in keeping with all the extravagances and exaggerations of a pre-War Paris basking in the sunshine of its last few seasons of brilliance, was the fashion of wearing coloured wigs. Every smart woman wanted one of these *têtes de couleurs*, as they were called, to wear in the evening. It was a queer, exotic caprice of mine, but it caught on. The wigs matched the dresses, a rose pink with a dress of deeper pink, a jade green with a dress of emerald. The coloured heads bobbing about a dance floor made it look like a flower garden, but it was a charming fashion for those it suited.

Before I had been in Paris six months I had more than doubled my staff. I made Celia my manageress, and with her I had a talented little band of designers working with me, for it was impossible now for me to personally design every model for the three houses, London, Paris, and New York. One of them was a very brilliant young man, named Edward Molyneux, who had come over with me from London.

He had been brought to see me while he was still

in his teens, a pale, delicate boy, with a passion for drawing and a still greater love of beautiful colours. He used to make little sketches of the models I designed, which were used in the showrooms, and his earnings varied from £1 to 30s. a week. Before long I realized that here was someone who had more than mere talent, he had a genius for designing clothes. I took him with me to Paris and to New York, and I think I taught him a great many things. He is now, of course, Molyneux, the famous couturier, and one of the most successful business men in Paris. He tells me that he owes everything to me. I would hardly like to say as much as that, but I am happy to remember that I certainly developed his own gifts.

Molyneux was especially successful in designing for the stage, for, like all very young designers, he had at that time a craze for the bizarre and exotic, nothing was too vivid for him, nothing too extravagant. All the greatest artistes of the French stage used to drive up to the tall old house in the Rue de Penthièvres and spend sometimes the entire day choosing clothes. I used to receive them in my studio, give them tea, and talk to them on all sorts of subjects, rarely about clothes, but at the end of half an hour I would have gained an impression of their personalities, and I would begin to picture them in chiffon, cut like the petals of a flower, or in stately brocades and ermines, whatever I thought suited them best. Then I would shut myself up and work furiously and in a few days everybody would be talking of what *Regina Badet* or *Mistinguette* was wearing.

And so 1912 and 1913 passed, and 1914, most brilliant summer of all, drew together the curtains on a Paris which we shall never know again, a Paris of lavish entertainments, of magnificent fêtes, of salons which rivalled those of the past, a Paris where music and wit and conversation flourished, and where life

went by with a thousand airs and graces which we have no time for now.

It was a Paris of great wealth and of almost unprecedented extravagance, for luxury trades were kept alive by the princely expenditure of American millionaires and Russian grand dukes. Fortunes were lavished on the fashionable courtesans, the uncrowned queens at whose feet men poured out a romantic adoration which has no parallel to-day, since beauty is no longer worshipped. The power of these women was amazing. In their palatial houses they entertained kings and statesmen, stirred with delicate, white, scented hands the broth of international affairs, maintained a retinue of servants and dependents, and spent money like water. And with it all they were the idols of the public ; Paris which had howled with derision at the follies and extravagances of Marie Antoinette scarcely more than a century before, loved the tyrannies of these twenty or thirty queens who had arisen in her place.

In the morning crowds used to wait in the Avenue du Bois to watch them get out of their electric broughams ; it was almost like a pageant. Each one of them affected some particular caprice. One would be dressed in white always, in robes of almost nun-like severity, with a simple girdle knotted round the waist, until one saw at a second glance that the robes of white chiffon were transparent, that their wearer appeared to have practically nothing on underneath them, and that the "simple girdle" was composed of a rope of pearls.

Another, I think it was "la belle Otero", would dress in tiger skins and golden sandals, while in attendance on her would be four huge negroes, dressed like the slaves of old times ; sometimes they carried her in a sort of palanquin, on their shoulders. One of them who affected to be the reincarnation of the Pompadour surrounded herself with possessions which had once

belonged to the famous royal favourite, dressed in the costume of the Pompadour's day and only went out in a carriage drawn by four white horses.

All these women went about in public wearing jewels worth fifty thousand pounds or more, but I do not think they were ever robbed, they were the spoilt children of Paris, they appealed to the sense of the dramatic which is engrained in the Parisian, and so they were loved and protected.

Many of them used to come to me for their clothes, and I was surprised to find them far more interesting to talk to than I should have expected from their mode of life. I found out that they took just as much pains to develop their minds as they did to keep their beauty. They had lessons in half a dozen languages, were taught music by the professors of the Conservatoire and used to pay enormous fees to some of the great scholars of the day to come and discuss literature, art and politics with them. This was done in order that they might feel mentally the equals of the wealthy and cultured men who frequented their salons.

Yet with all this money many of them ended their days in direst poverty, for there are few things more tragic than the fate of a dethroned favourite. Only a very few of them managed to save enough to keep them in their old age, some of the more prudent married wealthy bourgeois, one or two went into convents . . . nobody knows what has become of the rest. They have simply dropped out.

I can remember so vividly many of them sweeping into my showrooms, choosing perhaps in one morning a thousand pounds' worth of clothes, very often more. One of them, I remember, bought four hats, each with their wonderful aigrettes costing 100 francs each. Her secretary made out the cheque for them and they were carried down to her car. Another spent in one week fifty thousand francs on dresses, hats and their accom-

panying underclothes, handkerchiefs and scent. Most of them were generous to a fault. I remember that one of them was in the showroom once when a poor old woman came in to beg. She had somehow or other eluded the commissionaire and slipped unnoticed up the stairs. The saleswoman gave her some money and told her to go out at once, but the famous beauty, who was trying on hats, summoned her across the room. Catching up hats, bags, scarves and fans, and in fact everything that was in reach, she loaded them upon the bewildered beggar, who staggered out and down the stairs with her arms full of the most costly finery. They could have been of little use to the poor old soul, except to make her an object of suspicion to every passing policeman, for second-hand, in the sort of shops which would be accessible to her, they would not bring in a twentieth part of their proper value. But it was a kind gesture.

One of the beauties of the pre-War Paris whom I remember best was Monna Delza. She was an exquisitely beautiful creature, with a hundred whims and fancies. She had all sorts of beauty treatments which she carried out zealously, bathed in milk, washed her hair in champagne in which rosemary and bay leaves had been steeped, and looked after her health with the same fastidious care as Ninon de l'Enclos used in the preservation of her beauty. It was said that she never walked anywhere except in her own house, and she was massaged for hours each day with a special oil which was prepared by an old gipsy woman from a secret formula. All these stories endeared her to the public, and crowds used to wait round the door of her wonderful house. She had spent thousands of pounds on decorating it, and among her other possessions was the bed which had belonged to Marie Antoinette. This queen of fashion slept every night on the bed where the last of the Queens of France had laid her unhappy

head, and knelt upon the *prie-Dieu* where she had perhaps poured out agonized prayers for the safety of her children and herself.

I made a great many dresses for Monna Delza, and she was, if I remember rightly, the first to wear one of my coloured wigs. She was so lovely that it was a joy to dress her, and I always found her an inspiration.

Then there was Mata Hari, who afterwards met her death at the hands of the French in the War, shot as a spy. Nobody ever knew exactly who Mata Hari was, for she carried the secret of her birth to the grave with her. She was a strange, exotic creature, arrogant and overbearing, subject to dreadful fits of melancholy. She had many lovers, some of the richest and most aristocratic men in Europe were among them, for she seemed to have some mysterious power of fascination. Not one of them was able to save her from her fate, although every effort was made and hundreds of thousands of pounds were offered as bribes for her release, but without avail. The man who loved her best of all the crowd who surrounded her never recovered from the shock of her death. He went into a Trappist monastery.

Poor little Gaby Deslys was another of my clients in Paris. She was not so beautiful as some of the others, but there was something endearing in her personality, and her smile, which was at once very merry and yet wistful, was one of her greatest charms. She was very individual in her style of dress and used to like the most exaggerated fashions, but they always suited her. She brought in the high hats with crowns tilted up like flower-pots, and covered with feathers. I designed one for her, but when it was finished I did not care for the effect of it.

“You must change your hair-dressing,” I told her critically.

So we experimented, and presently Gaby appeared

with her hair dressed low at the nape of the neck and only slightly waved. The hairdressing caught on at once, and within a few days every fashionable woman in Paris had copied it.

Gaby had a royal admirer who was absolutely devoted to her. He often came with her to the house in the Rue de Penthièvres and waited patiently while she was being fitted. He was very emotional and very jealous. Once they had a violent quarrel in the fitting-room about some man who was paying her attentions, and stormed at one another, both of them shouting so loudly that every word could be heard in the show-room. Gaby rushed up and down in her silk petticoat, while the fitters waited to try on her new clothes, and her royal admirer worked himself up into such a state of anger that it culminated in a fit of hysteria in which he threw himself on the floor and sobbed. After he had been given brandy and helped to a sofa they had an almost equally violent reconciliation.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE years I spent in Paris were some of the happiest in my life.

As soon as I had opened the house in the Rue de Penthièvres I started to look for a flat, for I hated the communal life of an hotel, and I wanted to have my own things about me.

I found a lovely little *appartement* in the Rond Point des Champs-Élysées. It was at the top of a tall house, very quaint and old-fashioned, with a big salon which made an ideal studio when I wanted to work at home, and a bedroom which was always full of sunlight, for it had three double windows. I used to breakfast there early in the mornings and lie in bed looking out over Paris, watching the Seine curling lazily along and the slow-moving barges bringing their freight into Paris before the rest of the world was well awake, and in the evening I would watch the sun setting over the Arc de Triomphe in a blaze of crimson and purple and gold.

I loved housekeeping in Paris too. No fuss or trouble about meals, you just gave the cook so much to spend every day, and she did the rest. It was like the wave of a magician's wand, you never knew what you were going to be given to eat until it appeared on the table, perfectly cooked. It was all so simple, and, in pre-War Paris, so cheap. The only shopping I ever did was buying the flowers. Twice a week I used to go to the flower market, and for a few francs I would bring home an armful of roses, lilac and carnations, or whatever was in bloom at the time.

On Saturday evenings I used to give little informal parties and keep open house for all my friends. There was generally a sort of buffet supper at which everyone helped themselves, and there would be music and a great deal of conversation, which usually involved us in argument. On rare occasions we would prevail on Réjane, who was nearly always one of the guests, to recite to us, and we would sit spellbound with the beauty of her voice. At those moments one forgot that she was old and almost plain, forgot everything except the character she was portraying. Without the background of the stage, without lighting or make-up or anything but that golden, flexible voice, she could convey the illusion of being young and beautiful when she chose.

Then there would be Comte Boni de Castellane, without whom no fashionable gathering was complete at that time. "Anna Gould's husband" most people labelled him at first, until they came under the influence of his own brilliant and forceful personality. He was clever, cynical and very elegant in a tired sort of way, and above all, quite different from anybody else. He could wear the most amazing clothes, coats with enormous padded shoulders and high stock collars, and look well in them, and in fact get away with any eccentricity. He had a great idea of the value of a pose.

The night before I opened the branch in the Rue de Penthièvres I dined with him at the Ritz. I had been very busy all day, and had not taken the trouble to dress. I wore the plainest of little black frocks with no jewels. Every other woman in the restaurant had made a wonderful toilette, the jewels sparkled like a Christmas tree.

Boni de Castellane observed my appearance with the greatest satisfaction.

"Ah, Madame, *comme vous êtes rudement chic !*"

he exclaimed. "Who but you would have thought of wearing that simple, that so inconspicuous black dress, when all the world knows that you could have the most magnificent clothes ever created, if you chose. It is real artistry this appearance on the eve of the mannequin display!"

I laughed at his point of view, for I had never thought of wearing my little black dress to make an effect. I had only put it on because I had not thought about it at all.

Curiously enough after I became a dressmaker I ceased to take much interest in my clothes. Before I started creating dresses for other women I used to love making my own, but the more my fame as a designer spread the more likely I was to turn up at some ultra-fashionable gathering in a model which had done duty for two or even three seasons. I suppose it is the same principle that inspires the proverb of the cobbler's children being always the worst shod. Most of us get a surfeit of the things which we work amongst all day and want to get away from them whenever we can.

Leon Bakst was like me in this respect. At the time all Paris was talking of the scenery he had designed for the Russian Ballet, which had taken the critics and public alike by storm, he was living at an *appartement* in the Boulevard Malherbes furnished with the utmost simplicity. The man whose blending of colour on the stage was so audacious it took one's breath away decorated his own rooms in shades of sober grey.

I grew to know Leon Bakst well, and liked him immensely. He used to come to my studio and play with the gorgeous silks and brocades there, draping himself up in them, running the delicate materials through his fingers in an abstracted way.

"They give me ideas for my designs," he would say when I asked him what he was doing.

He was one of the few people whom I would allow to be near me when I was working, for he had one of the quietest and most restful personalities of anyone I have ever met. He had the rare gift of silence, and never talked a great deal, although what he had to say was always worth listening to.

Before I had been in Paris many months I had gathered round me all the people whose society I liked best of all, people who did things, artists, writers, sculptors, musicians. The Faubourg, with its dull dinner-parties and interminable receptions, I avoided ; my youthful recollections of it were too vivid ! Paris is infinitely more friendly to the stranger within its gates than London, for it is not divided into countless cliques as London is. In Paris there is only *la haute société* and *le monde artistique*. I preferred to belong to the latter, and its members took me to themselves in the friendliest and most delightful way.

At the Villa Trianon I met some of the most interesting men and women of the day. This beautiful villa in Versailles was shared by three charming American women, Elsie de Wolfe, Elizabeth Marbury and Anne Morgan. The last was the daughter of Pierpoint Morgan, very talented, very good-looking and immensely rich. She had more suitors than she knew how to get rid of, but she turned a deaf ear to them all. The three were the pioneers of the bachelor girls of to-day, until Elsie deserted the fold and became Lady Mendl.

Paris envied them their youth and their freedom, and their obvious enjoyment of it ; soon it had adopted them. Their receptions were famous, nearly every celebrity in the world of art, music and literature flocked to them. Before long they were the leaders

of a little coterie of brilliant young people ; the day of youth was just dawning, young painters were getting their work into the Salon, young composers were getting their music played.

So grey-bearded philosophers and historians and famous artists and playwrights paid homage to the youthful occupants of the Villa Trianon, walked in its lovely gardens, argued with one another and sometimes quarrelled ; but they always came again.

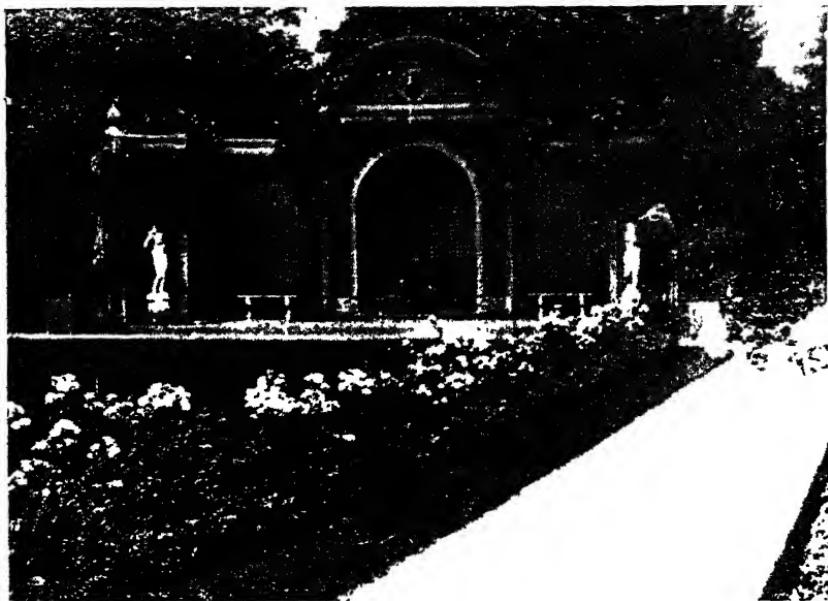
At one of these receptions I met Victorien Sardou. It was a little while before his death in 1908. He was a very distinguished-looking old gentleman, with such beautiful manners that it was a pleasure to talk to him. I told him how much I appreciated the honour of meeting him.

“I feel that I ought to make you tell me all sorts of interesting things,” I said to him, “so that in the future when I tell people I once had the privilege of talking to the great Sardou I shall be able to add all that he told me.”

“Ah, Madame, what do you want me to tell you ?” he answered. “Do not all men, whether they are supposed to be celebrated or not, say the same things to a young and pretty woman ?”

So we discussed my work and my studio, and the rival merits of French and Italian cooking, for he was something of a gourmet ; and then, knowing what an authority he was on the French Revolution, I wanted to know his opinion on a question which had always puzzled me.

“*Cher maître*,” I asked, “do you believe that Count Fersen was Marie Antoinette’s lover or not ? I do hope he was, because I have always admired her, and been so sorry for her, and I should like to think that she had at least that much happiness before she went to the guillotine.”



THE GARDEN of ELSIE DE WOLFE'S (LADY MENDL)
Villa Trianon at Versailles, 1913



MY HUSBAND AND SELF
in the Garden of "Pavilion Mars" at Versailles in 1914, just before the
War, with Porthos, the huge St. Bernard, and Mr. Futze, the Peke

A smile lit up his rather stern face.

“Cher Madame, ne vous inquiétez pas !”

It was at the Villa Trianon that I first came to know Sarah Bernhardt. She was even then a very old woman, but I shall always remember the vivid impression of youth her wonderful violet eyes gave me ; the soul which looked out of them was so eternally young ; so was her voice, and her smile, which was extraordinarily sweet, was that of a young and beautiful woman. She was very friendly and charming to me and after that first meeting came several times to my studio. I designed her a number of dresses. All of them had the familiar high collar framing her face, for she would never wear anything else.

“You must not try to make me forget I am an ugly old woman,” she said to me once. “As a matter of fact I was an ugly young one, too, but it has not made men love me any the less.”

I could well realize how irresistible her charm must have been when she was young, for there was something like a flame of fire in her spirit. No man would ever feel sure of this strange woman, at one moment he would hold her in his arms, at the next she would be as aloof and remote as the stars. Although she attracted men all her life, had many love affairs and admitted to having received over a thousand proposals of marriage, I do not think that Sarah Bernhardt could ever really love any man. It always seemed as though she wanted to avenge the pain which the father of her son gave her in the time of her early youth, when he had her turned away from his door with her child in her arms, and only the sum of fifty francs between her and starvation. The bitterness and contempt which she felt for him in that moment never left her for the rest of her life, and she retaliated by hurting the men who fell in love with her.

I remember a story which a well-known and immensely wealthy Englishman once told me in connection with Sarah Bernhardt, although it was very much against himself.

There was at that time in Paris a woman whose boast it was that she could procure any woman for any man provided he was willing to pay enough. Although her activities were common knowledge she was actually received, incredible as it seems, in Society in both London and Paris, and no doubt did very well out of her various transactions.

This particular Englishman, after resisting her blandishments, told her that there was only one woman he desired in the whole of Paris and that woman was Sarah Bernhardt. The go-between was doubtful. It might be done, she said, but the great actress was very proud and it was many years since she had had any love affairs. It would certainly need a great deal of money to induce her to consent to receive him. He replied that he was willing to pay any sum to possess the most wonderful woman in the world.

A few days later the go-between returned. Much to his surprise she announced that she had been successful. She had visited Sarah Bernhardt and had broached the object of her visit as tactfully as possible. Sarah had listened in silence, looking very thoughtful. When she spoke it was only to ask the exact terms of the transaction. The go-between named an enormous sum.

Sarah shrugged her shoulders. "Very well, then. I suppose I should be a fool to refuse so much money."

Accordingly the money was sent to her and after the cheque had been cashed the suitor went to call upon her, carrying a splendid bouquet. He was full of the most eager anticipation, he said, in telling me the story afterwards, and all the way to the great

actress's house he called up visions of her as he had so often seen her on the stage, tragic and beautiful in her different rôles ; pale and spiritual and appealing as "*La Dame aux Camelias*", terrible and magnificent as "*Lucrezia Borgia*". She seemed the very spirit of all womanhood, a thousand women rolled into one. What a wonderful experience to hold her in his arms, to see her in the flesh for the first time instead of from the stalls of a theatre. True, he knew that she was not a young woman, but who would ever think of age in connection with Sarah Bernhardt ? Her experience of life would make her the more enchanting, so different from some insipid girl.

All these thoughts passed through his mind, he told me, as he walked to the house, and his heart was beating with excitement when he rang the bell.

He was admitted and told that the great actress was expecting him. Would he walk straight in to the salon ? Madame was there.

He walked in and the woman who was sitting there turned at his entrance. To his horror he saw an ugly old creature, with withered face, bleared eyes and scanty grey hair twisted into curling rags. She wore a woollen shawl over her dingy black dress, and in her hand she held a grey stocking she had been knitting as he entered.

"I came to see Madame Sarah Bernhardt," he said, supposing her to be a servant.

The old woman carefully put a pair of spectacles on her nose and regarded him through them.

"I am Sarah Bernhardt," she answered in a harsh voice. "What do you want?"

It was too great a blow to romance. The delicate fabric of his dreams was torn for ever. Stammering a few broken words of apology he fled from the room ignominiously. He never saw her again.

I like this story of Sarah Bernhardt, for I can so well understand the mischievous sense of humour which prompted her to teach this man, who had thought to buy her love, a lesson. I can imagine how she must have laughed as she made herself up as a hideous old hag. Yet I think that if his love for her had been sincere enough to stand the test she put him to the story might have ended very differently.

One Sunday in May I arrived at the Villa Trianon and found the guests in the garden, scattered in little groups on the lawn waiting for tea which Elsie de Wolfe was pouring out. As usual there was a crowd, artists, writers and musicians, but most of the attention seemed to be centred on one woman, who was talking very little herself. She stood quite still while the conversation eddied and rippled around her, rather like a dark, silent pool into which someone has thrown a handful of pebbles. I noticed, when the circle parted a little, that she was dressed very simply in a tunic of chiffon which showed every line of her beautiful body, and her feet, which were encased in sandals. The lovely poise of her head and the way in which she held the armful of lilac she had gathered reminded one irresistibly of a statue. I was told that she was the famous dancer, Isadora Duncan.

As I already knew her brother Raymond, whom I had met in America, and some of the other members of her family, we found plenty to talk about, and a friendship was begun which, although we would sometimes lose sight of one another for years together, lasted until the day of her death.

There was much to admire in the character of this eccentric, impulsive and brilliantly clever woman, who seemed fated to be so often tragically misunderstood. I knew her well enough to realize that what most people took for affectation was to her a passionate reality. She lived for her art and for beauty in any form, she

could only express emotion in movement. She was, for instance, bitterly criticized in Paris for the funeral dance she performed over the bodies of her two children, who were drowned in the Seine ; even her best friends were shocked at the apparent callousness of it. She could not have felt any real grief, said the gossips, to think of dancing at such a time. They were quite wrong, for she grieved desperately for her children, and never for one moment forgot them, but she was so accustomed to express sorrow in the gestures of the old Greeks that it came naturally to her to do so in a moment of great emotion.

I have many memories of Isadora Duncan, as a young woman at the height of her fame, and as a woman growing old and fighting desperately against age. Her death has been called a tragedy, but it was infinitely less tragic than her life would have been to her had she lived to grow really old. She was so utterly pagan in everything she thought and did, and the years would have held nothing for her once she had lost her youth.

Isadora often came to see me in my studio and later, when I took a house at Versailles which had a beautiful garden, she would sometimes come and dance there. I remember on one occasion she danced for nearly two hours with scarcely a pause. It was a lovely mid-summer's day, and I had invited a number of people to a garden-party. Isadora Duncan and her dancers had promised to appear, and all the guests were anxious to see them, for it was some time since they had given a public performance in Paris.

The party began at four, and Isadora had promised to be there at half-past. Five o'clock arrived, and there was no sign of her ; a quarter past five ; the band was waiting patiently and the Duncan dancers in their Greek draperies were standing about the lawn unable to begin their programme without her. Six

o'clock passed and the guests were growing impatient, some of them had already gone, the rest sat talking and trying not to look bored. By half-past six I knew that my party had been a complete failure, and that there was nothing to be done but to send the Duncan dancers away and make what excuses I could to the few remaining guests for Isadora's non-arrival.

Fond as I was of her I was exceedingly annoyed at her behaviour and went to bed feeling in a very bad humour. I was undressing when I heard a great commotion at the front door. Someone was apparently trying to break into the house. I flung on a dressing-gown and ran downstairs, followed by my secretary and the *valet-de-chambre*. A series of resounding knocks was followed by the voice of Isadora Duncan calling, "Let me in!"

The door was opened at once and there stood Isadora and X., with whom she was at that time having a passionate love affair. They had both been to a café, where they had had a great deal to drink, and had come to fulfil Isadora's belated engagement with me. She had completely forgotten that she had promised to dance at my garden-party until they were half-way through dinner, and with her characteristic impulsiveness she had insisted on coming out to Versailles that evening.

While she was speaking she flung off her mantle until she stood dressed only in her chiffon draperies, and X., going into the salon, sat down at the piano and began to play. The strains of a Chopin nocturne floated out to us through the open windows as Isadora walked out on to the centre of the lawn, and raising her arms in a beautiful sweeping movement started to dance as though she was inspired.

It was an unforgettable scene. I shall keep the picture of that June night in my garden at Versailles,



THE GARDEN AT VERSAILLES
where Isadora Duncan danced at midnight

with Isadora dancing in the moonlight while X. played Chopin, in my memory as long as I live. For nearly two hours she held her audience of three, myself, my secretary and the valet, spellbound while she danced, now in the shadow, now in the light of the full moon, her purple scarf throwing into relief her white arms, her white feet gleaming against the velvety green of the lawn.

It was the last time I ever saw her dance, for she left Paris soon afterwards, and our paths did not cross again until just shortly before her death, when she had practically given up dancing.

Isadora Duncan, like her brother Raymond, had a profound contempt for modern dancing, which she always said was ugly and meaningless. I remember that just before the War I invited her to a dinner-party at Luna Park, which was then the most fashionable place in Paris, and she looked so out of place there in her Grecian draperies among the latest evening dresses. Afterwards she burlesqued the dancing of the Tango, which she had seen there. Just at that time Paris was in the grip of a positive mania for the Tango—the post-War dancing wave was as nothing to it. Everyone was Tango mad, from *la haute société* down to the little midinettes, whom one used to see practising new steps in the Jardins des Tuileries in their lunch hour. It brought in special fashions designed for the exigencies of “the scissors” and other complicated steps, the vogue for Argentine bands, and the gigolo. The last has been the most permanent of the innovations.

Before the Tango, with its difficult steps, became popular the professional partner was practically unknown, but when Paris adopted the Argentine's dance with such fervour, slim youths, also from the Argentine, began to see its possibilities as a means of livelihood. Those who wanted to be proficient in the

new steps had to have a teacher, and what more suitable than to have a teacher from the Tango's native land? As young and old took to the floor on a common impulse, determined at all costs to excel in the dance of the moment, more and more teachers were necessary. The mania for the Tango passed, but the professional partner remained.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ALL through that last brilliant pre-War summer Paris amused herself, spent recklessly, gave wonderful fêtes, laughed, danced and made love as though she had not a care in the world. And nobody saw the war clouds gathering up until they burst with shattering suddenness, silencing the music of the Tango bands, scattering the dancers to towns and villages all over France to await mobilization orders, parting the lovers.

In one week Paris was a changed city. There was nothing of the optimistic war-is-bound-to-be-over-before-Christmas spirit which was keeping London cheerful ; Paris was too near the war zone to take her position anything but seriously. Every man and woman went about with the haunting fear that at any moment their beloved city might be in the hands of the enemy. The night resorts of Montmartre might be crowded with men on leave, and women who were trying to make them forget the horrors of the trenches, but the gaiety there was hectic and unreal, the spontaneous *joie-de-vivre* of a few months before had gone, there were few dancers on the floor.

I remembered what Henri Bernstein, the famous French playwright, had said to me one evening at Luna Park in the spring. We had been discussing the mania for the Tango, and the absurd way in which it had gripped Paris.

“Ah, madame, I do not like it. People always feel this mad impulse to dance all day and all night just on the eve of a war.”

I laughed at the idea, for any possibility of

France going to war at that time seemed utterly unlikely. He shook his head sadly as he watched the couples dancing.

"You will see. We shall have a war before this time next year."

I often thought of his prophecy as I went in the new saddened city which Paris had become. The streets were full of women dressed in black; the churches were crowded all day long. Young and old, rich and poor sought to find comfort in prayer; people who had never been in a church for years spent hours there during the day; the altars blazed in the light of thousands of candles, queues of silent men and women waited their turn at dim confessional boxes, there were so many communicants at the early Masses that the clergy could scarcely cope with them all.

The shops were almost deserted, everybody was too busy doing some sort of war work to want to buy clothes, and for the first time in a century the Parisienne was almost indifferent as to what she wore. The women whose leisure hours had been pleasantly filled with doing delicate embroidery on silk and chiffon underclothes now worked till their fingers were roughened and blistered making bandages.

I wanted to take up some war work myself, but here my fellow directors of Lucile's stepped in. The Paris branch, they told me, was only being kept on its feet with the utmost difficulty, since its turnover had dwindled to a fraction of the pre-War figures. If it became necessary to close it the staff who had worked there for years would have to be disbanded, a real tragedy for them, and the French Government was issuing appeals to all employers to do their utmost from patriotic reasons to keep as many people in work as possible.

Obviously we could not continue to run the branch at a loss, and there was only one alternative to closing



A "MANNEQUIN" PARADE IN 1913
in the garden at Lucile's, 23, Hanover Square

it altogether, and this was to make the New York branch carry it on its shoulders. America was far removed from the War, and at this time was feeling little of its effects, so trade was still booming in New York and there was no reason why the branch there should not have its profits sufficiently increased to bear the losses of the house in Paris. This plan, they assured me, could only be possible if I would myself go out to New York to work up the business there.

So rather reluctantly, for I felt like a deserter, although I saw the wisdom of the plan, I sailed for New York with my mannequins and a collection of the newest models.

If I had expected to leave the War behind me when I stepped off the boat I was very much mistaken. Although America was far enough from the events which were convulsing the whole of Europe, and was at that time taking no active part in them, the entire country was seething with excitement. Nobody talked of anything but the War and the chances of the United States coming into it; everywhere one went one heard of people who were leaving for the front to help in the various voluntary Red Cross units which were being staffed and equipped by wealthy New Yorkers, and from the Four Hundred to small towns in the Middle West every woman who could use a needle or wind a skein of wool was turning out socks and shirts by the hundred. Never a week passed without some entertainment being organized in aid of a War charity, and thousands of pounds were raised for Belgian refugees and other sufferers.

Meanwhile the country was rent with argument between the pro-German and the pro-Allies. Naturally the latter far outnumbered their opponents, but there was considerable bitterness on both sides. You never knew when you were going to be involved in a quarrel. You would go out to a dinner-party and

find your neighbour on one side chafing at the delay which was keeping America back from entering the War, while on the other side would be a man who made no secret of his pro-German sympathies.

I remember going once to a very smart studio party in New York and being introduced to a man whom I was given to understand was a Swede. He was a handsome man with a small, pointed beard and a very cultured and pleasant way of talking English. We talked together nearly all the evening and I thought him one of the most fascinating conversationalists I had ever come across. Towards the end of the evening I realized that he was putting up a very unostentatious but very insistent propaganda for Germany. Almost imperceptibly he had led the conversation round to the subject of the War, and was stating the case against the Allies with such calm superiority that I lost my temper.

“Why, you are an enemy!” I said. “I thought Sweden was neutral.”

Just as he was beginning to tell me that he was not a Swede a woman came up.

“I heard you both arguing,” she said laughingly to me. “Are you not afraid of having your lovely house in Paris bombed by the Zeppelins?”

The fascinating stranger made a low bow.

“Believe me, it will be my first care to see that Madame’s house is not bombed,” he said as he turned away.

“Do you mean to say you did not know whom you were talking to?” said my friend. “Why, that is Herr Dernberg, the Kaiser’s chief propagandist in the United States.”

It struck me that Germany showed infinite pains in the way she organized her propaganda work, and infinite patience in the carrying out of it. Here was this man who was at the head of a small army of

propagandists in the United States laying himself out during a whole evening to win over one woman to the German cause.

I met him at one or two parties after that, for it was part of his policy to go out a great deal and mix with as many people as he could in a social way. I always found him the same, suave and tactful, apparently just the successful Jewish business-man he had been before he enjoyed the favour of the Kaiser. But he did not stand failure well, and as the time went by and he met with little success he grew irritable. His outburst of temper after the sinking of the *Lusitania*, when he warned the Americans that American ships carrying contraband would be treated in like fashion, brought about his downfall. He was ridiculed and cartooned mercilessly in the Press, and ridicule was the one thing which he could not bear, for he was like so many Germans—devoid of any sense of humour. His dignity collapsed like a pricked bubble, and shortly afterwards he applied for a safe-conduct to return to Germany.

Before I had been three months in New York I realized that I need have no fears on the score of the Paris branch, for the house in New York was literally coining money. I had never hoped for such a success in my rosiest dreams. The wealthy New York women almost received me with open arms, for they were delighted at the prospect of having me there to design for them in person. Practically no models were coming into the country from Paris, for apart from the fact that most of the French firms were in a bad way, and feeling the effect of the War as my own branch of Lucile's had done, transport was so uncertain and difficult, and the insurance against enemy submarines was such an expensive item that the great houses had to abandon the idea of exporting their dresses in any quantity. Without the lead of Paris, New York

was lost sartorially, for the American designers were not equal to the occasion, and were turning out some frightful garments. (It is only fair to say that they have improved enormously since those days, and New York and Hollywood have now some brilliant designers.)

So I became an institution, the established leader of the fashions in America, and so many orders poured in that even with the aid of four assistant designers, Robert Kalloch, Shirley Barker, Howard Greer, and Gilbert Clarke, we could only keep pace with them with the greatest difficulty.

The mannequin parades got so crowded that it became impossible to hold them in the house and I used to hire a theatre for several afternoons in the week, when I brought out my new spring and autumn collections and showed the models to audiences of two and three thousand.

To one of these parades came that maker of stars, Florenz Ziegfeld. He sat there in the stalls, a quiet man among the wives and daughters of the Four Hundred. He sat there and saw the curtain go up on a scene which might have come out of the Arabian Nights. Dolores, a wonderful and magnificent Dolores, in an Eastern gown of brocade sheathing her slim figure, glimmering like an opal with every movement, walked slowly across the stage, turned this way and that, her incomparable head held disdainfully high, and disappeared through the curtains. Hebe and Phyllis and Florence followed her, a lovely trio dressed in walking suits, parasols in their hands, the smart little hat of the moment set at precisely the proper angle on their heads.

So the parade went on, three hours of it, morning dresses, tea-gowns, nightdresses covered with exotic boudoir wraps, afternoon dresses for garden parties, evening dresses that made the women in the stalls give little cries of admiration.



DOLORES
in a "Ziegfeld Follie" Dress in 1916 in New York

And Mr. Ziegfeld sat it all out to the end.

Afterwards I was told a gentleman wanted to speak to me. It was Florenz Ziegfeld.

"I have got to have that scene of yours for my Follies," he began without preliminary. "You can ask what terms you like for it. It is going to be the biggest draw I have staged for years. That girl Dolores is marvellous, she will be the sensation of New York."

So the scene was transferred to the Ziegfeld Follies, and the gilded youth of New York saw Dolores walk across the stage as Mr. Ziegfeld had seen her, and, as he had predicted, went mad about her. The whole of New York paid homage to her beauty, Dolores was fêted and worshipped as though she had been a queen.

But she never came back to the showroom again, for her days as a mannequin were over. Florenz Ziegfeld came to me and asked me to release her from her engagement with me, so that he might have her permanently for his Follies. Naturally I consented, although I was very sorry to lose her, for she was the best mannequin I have ever had.

So Dolores, who had once been a little unknown business girl and earned a few shillings a week, became a celebrity, and in due time married the fairy prince, or rather an American millionaire, which is much more practical in these days of impoverished royalty.

After that I dressed many of Florenz Ziegfeld's productions, and found him delightful to work with. He is the most patient and the most considerate producer, never loses his temper no matter what happens, and treats every member of the chorus as politely as though she were a peeress in her own right. I never heard him once shout out an order at rehearsals, although his quiet voice was always heard giving directions.

That first little scene of mine which Ziegfeld

introduced into his Follies made theatrical history in one sense, for it introduced "the show girl", who was there simply to look beautiful and wear beautiful clothes, as opposed to the chorus girl, who was there to sing and dance and generally hold the show together. The show girl reached the zenith of her popularity in the War and just after it, and it is, I think, a sign of our waning interest in clothes that she is gradually disappearing from revue.

Whenever I dressed a scene for Ziegfeld, I used to quarrel with Joseph Urban, his aide-de-camp, over the question of the lighting. He had, to my mind, an unaccountable partiality for yellow lights, which I always thought spoilt the effect of my dresses, although they might be wonderful in other scenes. So I used to clamour for blue lights as background with a white "flood" on each dress as it appeared, and he used to tell me I would have to put up with his setting. But it always ended the same way. On the day of the dress-rehearsal Urban used to come to me and say sulkily: "Very well, have it your own way," and I did.

Notwithstanding our little disputes we were excellent friends, and I had the greatest admiration for his art. His settings are, I consider, unrivalled anywhere.

It was through Ziegfeld that I came to dress the most talked of girl in America, Peggy Hopkins Joyce, for he sent her to me when she was appearing in his productions. She was not, I thought, half so beautiful as Lilyan Tashman, now a film star, but she had a lovely figure. She had an extraordinary fascination for men. I remember that she once told me that she had been engaged to twenty-five different men in one year.

She and all the other Follies girls used to take endless pains with their figures. They were all carefully weighed every week and even the increase of half a pound was noted and they were told that they

must take it off. Many of them lived a life of rigid self-discipline, so many hours of exercise each day, so many hours of massage with special reducing cream, and only a very limited diet. If the scales recorded a too rapid gain they would go on a diet of milk and boiled potatoes for days together. This was the favourite reducing diet in America in those days, but there were other far more strenuous ones. Pauline Frederick, for whom I made several dresses, once told me that she had lived for an entire fortnight on black coffee when she wanted to reduce quickly for one of her films. She gained her object for she took off two stones, but she nearly ruined her health in doing it.

One of the women for whom I enjoyed designing most of all was Irene Vernon Castle, for she was so graceful and wears her clothes so beautifully.

When she was appearing in *Watch Your Step* she wrote asking me to design a dancing dress for her. She and her husband were then at the very height of their popularity in New York, and earning fabulous salaries. I invited her to lunch with me so that I could get an impression of her personality. I thought I had never seen a more exquisite woman, and she was so simple and unspoilt by success.

Half-way through lunch I said to her :

"I feel sure this is not our first meeting, but I cannot remember where I have seen you before."

And although the faint recollection puzzled me I could not place her definitely in my memory. Then we began to talk about Paris, and I knew at once. The first time I had seen the Vernon Castles dance was in Paris before the War. They had appeared at the Café de Paris there.

She remembered at once when I reminded her of it.

"We never thought we would do well in those days," she told me. "We were both desperately poor,

and hardly earned anything. We had to simply beg the manager of the *Café de Paris* to take us on there, because another manager had let us down and we were reduced to our last ten francs. In the end, although he was plainly far from being enthusiastic, the manager agreed to give us a week's trial. Mercifully we were a great success and from that time we never looked back."

All through lunch we talked about her dogs and the house which she and her husband had just taken, and her new dances, but we never mentioned clothes until she got up to go.

"Good heavens!" she said. "I came here especially to discuss the dresses I wanted you to make for me, and we have never even mentioned them!"

"That was just what I wanted," I answered. "Leave it to me and I know I can design you something beautiful."

So I shut myself up in my studio and I made her the three dresses which were to become famous all over the States and in Europe as well, for they had such an instantaneous success in New York that I sent copies of them to Hanover Square and the Rue de Penthièvres.

One was in cloudy chiffon, thirty yards round the hem, a lovely, misty blue. I called it "Love in the Mist", for it looked just like that flower. Another was a period dress with a hooped skirt, which swung to and fro when she danced. They set a fashion which was followed by two-thirds of the women in America, but they did more than that. Irene Castle and the dresses I designed her brought in a new type in women's beauty. She was the first of the moderns. Her slim, almost boyish figure and her sleek, bobbed head (her hair had originally been cut off after an illness, and she always kept it short afterwards), set a new standard which other women imitated. It started

in New York and spread to Europe, and soon the coiffeurs were working double time cutting off curls and chignons, doing away with hideous pads and atrocious side-combs, and turning out a procession of other sleek, bobbed heads to follow in the wake of Irene Vernon Castle.

As for the dresses I designed her they have never really gone out of fashion, any one of them could be worn to-day. I recognized that she was an unusual type when she came to me all those years ago, and I knew instinctively that hers was the accepted type which the fashions of the next ten or fifteen years would follow, so I anticipated them a little. I designed her dresses which stressed the importance of line, the tight little bodice of chiffon with the cowl collar, which is so popular to-day, and the full skirt fitting closely over the hips, and billowing out into wide godet below the knees.

One morning Lily Langtry came to see me at my studio. She was appearing in a play in New York, and wanted me to design her a dress. I was delighted to see her, for it was many years since our paths had crossed and I had not designed her any clothes since those early days in Hanover Square when my first fashion parades had created such a sensation.

She wanted, she told me, a dress as like the one I had designed for Irene Vernon Castle as possible. I looked at her and wondered what in the world I could say to dissuade her from having the very last dress she ought to wear. Irene Castle's dress, which was the very incarnation of youth and slenderness, would have been a travesty on Lily Langtry who, beautiful as she still was, belonged to another generation.

I told her as tactfully as I could that I thought the dress would not suit her as well as some others I was designing, for it was essentially a dancer's dress and was intended for someone very slim. I should prefer

something more dignified for her, and suggested a madonna blue satin which I thought would set off her blue eyes and clear skin to perfection.

She did not seem very enthusiastic about it, but let me make it for her. When it was finished she put it on and stood before the glass. I saw the tears were running down her cheeks.

"It makes me look old," she said with a smile that was somehow infinitely pathetic.

"Then you shall not have it if it makes you unhappy," I said at once. "Never mind, I will take it back and sell it to somebody else."

So I took back the dress and she got another designer to make her a little chiffon frock, which if she had only believed it, made her look far, far older than the one I had designed for her. But in spite of this little incident we became firm friends, and used to see a great deal of one another.

She used to talk to me about her life and tell me of her past love affairs, and I enjoyed listening to her, for she could be delightfully witty and entertaining when she chose.

Once I remember when she was speaking of the success she had had in her life she said :

"I was lucky because I was born just at the right time for my particular temperament. When I was a young woman all my contemporaries were so dreadfully strict and goody-goody; no make-up, none of the little vanities everyone takes as a matter of course now; no dancing with the same man more than twice in an evening, unless he was your husband or fiancé, no going out with a man unless you were heavily chaperoned; and a whole set of laws of the Medes and Persians. So you see the men were all tremendously intrigued with me, I was such a reaction from the women they were accustomed to. I was thought so 'daring' because I broke through a lot of silly



PHYLLIS

in a dress designed and made at my studio, 160 Fifth Avenue, New York,
for the Ziegfeld 1916 Follies

conventions. People have sometimes believed I did so well because I always said 'yes' to men, whereas it was really because all the other women said 'no'."

Those were happy days in New York, although I worked harder than I ever worked in my life. I was designing for all Ziegfeld's productions, and for most of the well-known film stars as well. I would go to the studio in the morning and find a note from Ziegfeld saying he wanted sixty dresses for his new show, and would I please let him have them in ten days. There would be a frenzied consultation, and a hurried telephoning in all directions, but in less than an hour the work would have been begun.

Later in the day would come a cable from the house in Hanover Square. Would I please send over a new collection of models? And I would start planning and scheming, and deciding what would make the most appeal to the taste of War-time London. Half-way through it I would remember that there was a thirty thousand dollar wedding order for the daughter of a Chicago millionaire waiting to be put through, and there would be more hurried consultations and more telephoning, but somehow or other it would all be done, and by the end of the day I would be driving back to the beautiful house I had taken at Marmaronac, on the Sound, with the pleasant consciousness that I had not only saved the Paris branch but that I was making a small fortune.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THESE War-time years in New York were so crowded that looking back on them is like turning over the leaves of an album of pictures ; happy pictures of wonderful parties I used to give in my home on the Sound, when I would fill in with artists, musicians and writers, and there would be bathing by moonlight and dancing on the lawns afterwards ; sad pictures of bidding good-bye to one after another of those light-hearted boys who hailed America's entry into the War as a joyous adventure and came so proudly to show their brand-new uniforms before sailing for Europe ; pictures of visiting hospitals, trying to comfort tragic wrecks of men : pictures of going down into my studio, told that a client had called and finding instead of a woman come to choose dresses, a woman heart-broken at the news of the loss of a husband or son, who had rushed to me in her longing for sympathy.

A dressmaker is every woman's confidante and during those days I was continually on the rack of other people's griefs. Sometimes I would go to one of the hospitals to sit in a corridor smelling of anti-septics, holding the trembling hand of some woman who knew that behind one of the closed doors her husband's life depended on the success of the operation the surgeons were performing. Once I had to break to a man the news that he would never see again. The tears were running down my cheeks, but his wife had implored me to do it.

"You always manage to make people see the funny side of things," she said. "He would take it better from you than from anyone."

Then there were the little comedies of the War.

Once I remember a husband invalided out of the War, and returned home sooner than he was expected was told that his wife was at my studio. In a few minutes he was round there and dashed into the fitting-room. The joy of the meeting made them forget everything but each other. The wife flung on her coat and hat, and they went out together, clinging to one another's arms and laughing like children. In a minute they were back. The lady had completely forgotten that she had been in the midst of a fitting when her husband had arrived, and until they had been stopped by a scandalized commissionaire neither had realized that she was walking down the street in a short jacket and a pair of georgette camiknickers.

During the short months that America was at war there was no wave of economy, at least in the matter of clothes, such as there was in both London and Paris. The dresses had never been so elaborate, the prices never so high; feminine New York would pay anything in the world to be well-dressed.

As an instance of this I remember the wedding of one millionaire's daughter. The family was new-rich, and the mother had heard of Lady Duff Gordon and was determined that nobody else should design her daughter's trousseau. She sent a message asking for an appointment, and saying that she would call at my studio during the week-end as she was particularly anxious to get the work started.

At that time I was feeling very tired and run down, for I had been overworking for months, and I had gone to my house on the Sound for a week's rest. I telephoned to my secretary at the studio saying that it would be utterly impossible for me to see the lady during the week-end, and that she must either let one of my assistant designers begin with the arrangements for the trousseau, or wait until I could come back to New York myself.

A few hours later an urgent telephone message came from the studio. The lady had called there and said that she must see me at all costs, she was prepared to pay any extra fee that I asked for a personal consultation.

"I am not going to be disturbed this week-end," I answered. "You can tell her that nothing less than five thousand dollars will tempt me back to New York during this heat."

To my amazement the message came back that the lady had handed my secretary a cheque for five thousand dollars.

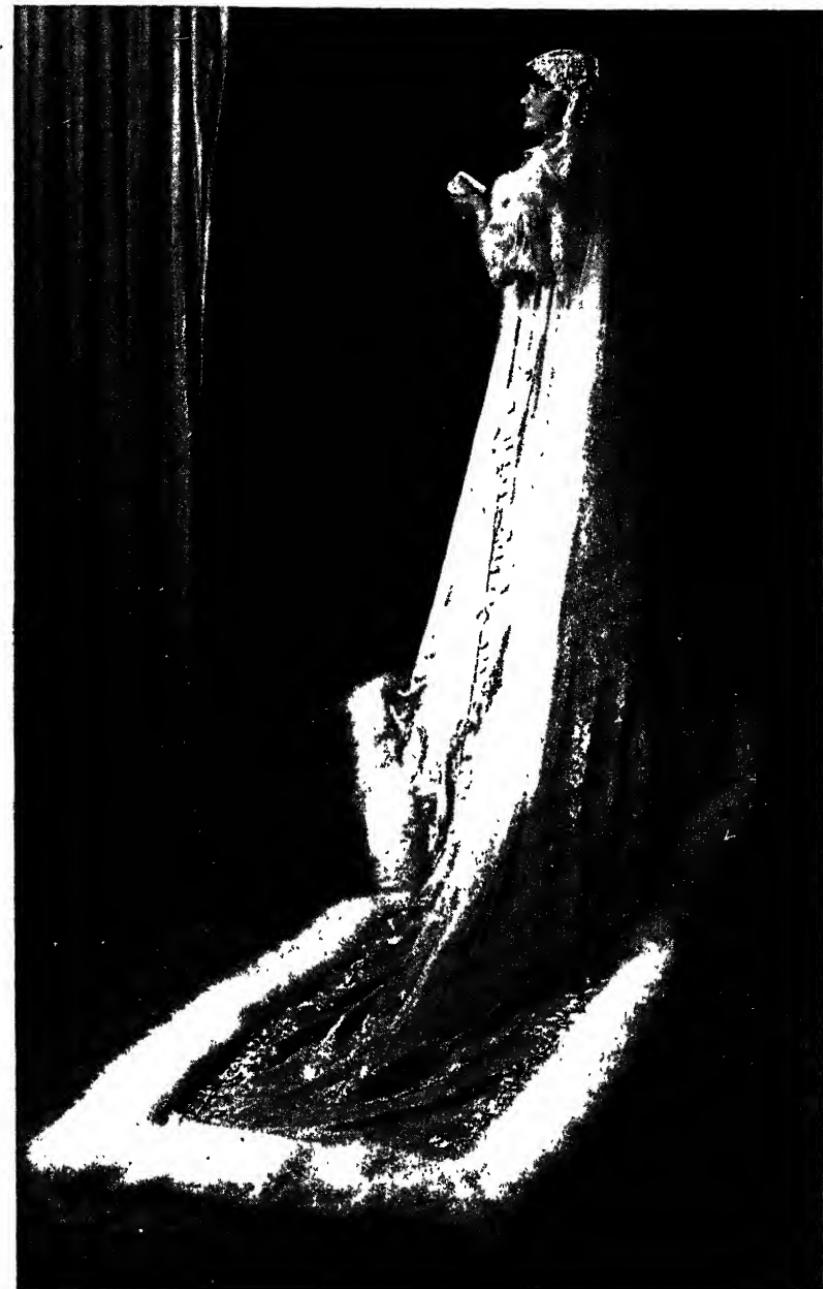
Rather than have the trivial disappointment of not seeing me on the day she had fixed for the consultation, she had been perfectly willing to pay the equivalent of a thousand pounds !

I took the cheque, went back to Town and began on the trousseau immediately. Before it was finished it had cost something under thirty thousand dollars. The wedding dress alone, which was sewn with pearls, cost six hundred pounds, the veil of old lace another hundred and fifty.

But although I often got "money for jam", the current phrase in New York, in this way, I often permitted myself the luxury of working simply for the joy of making something beautiful. In that I suppose I was rather like an artist who varies his prices according to his sitters. I made dresses for practically nothing for girls who were on the stage and could not afford high prices. I have always had rather a soft spot for the girl who has to earn her own living, probably because I have always earned mine, and I used to feel amply rewarded when one of them would come to me and say :

"You know I got that engagement through the dress you made for me."

In America it is a tragedy quite out of all propor-



PHYLLIS

in the Wedding Gown for which I got the £1000 cheque for coming into
New York to design it

tion for a woman to be shabby, for nearly all doors are closed to her. The working girls in New York would literally starve themselves rather than go to interview prospective employers in shoes that look anything but new, and gloves which are not immaculate. Almost unconsciously a woman is judged by how she looks in New York, and the general standard is much higher than it is anywhere else. There every business girl is perfectly *soignée*. her nails are beautifully kept, her blouse or muslin collar looks as though it has just been turned out by a French laundry, although the probability is that it has been washed and ironed in the back kitchen, and her hair is done in the latest fashion, even though she has had to sacrifice her lunch on two days of the week to pay the coiffeur.

The American business girl's wardrobe is a matter of anxious thought and careful planning. Her clothes must look new at all costs ; they may be cheap and shoddy but they must not have the least sign of wear. So the multitude of pay-on-instalment shops cater for her specially. Each week she is paying so much for her dress, so much for her shoes, so much for the coat she bought last spring ; it is such a customary proceeding that it does not worry her that she is scarcely ever out of debt, she cheerfully orders a new winter coat while she is still paying the instalment on the last.

Many times I played fairy godmother to some girl on the stage who had youth and beauty and talent but no money. Tentatively she would ask me if she might "pay on instalment".

"No, I never do that," I would tell her, "but I will make you a dress for nothing."

Dressed in it she used to face agents and managers with new courage, and very often got a job.

One lovely afternoon in late spring I was hard at work in my studio when I was told that Miss Pickford wanted to see me. The name conveyed nothing to me,

and I was rather annoyed at the interruption; however I gave orders for her to be admitted.

There walked into the room a picturesque little figure so tiny and childlike in appearance that for a moment I thought it was a little girl dressed up in her mother's clothes. Her shining golden hair fell in long curls round her face, her pink and white skin, which was quite innocent of make-up, had the transparent bloom of a child's and her hazel eyes had the wide gaze one generally notices in children.

"You don't know me, of course," she said coming forward, "I'm Mary Pickford."

She told me that she had come from Hollywood to New York on purpose to consult me, as she wanted some dresses designed by me for her next film.

"I'm not going to tell anyone I'm here," she explained. "I have managed to give all the reporters the slip, and Mother and I are going to stay at quite a small hotel so that we can go out shopping without anyone knowing who we are."

She was as excited as a child over the prospect of her new clothes and begged me to sketch her something immediately. It was not a very easy matter because she was so petite that ordinary fashions looked absurdly incongruous on her; furs almost smothered her, and even the long dresses with trains, which everyone was wearing for evening at that time, made her look smaller than ever.

"What I really ought to put you in," I told her, "is a little white, muslin frock with a blue sash and strapped shoes and socks. I don't know how in the world I am ever going to make you look grown-up."

In the end we found a compromise between her own particular type and the prevailing line, and I designed her several dresses. We got to know one another well during the process, and I think she enjoyed her visits to the studio as much as I did. I found her

as artless and charming in everyday life as she was on the screen.

Her tremendous vitality made her a delightful companion. She had such a spontaneous enjoyment in everything she did. She was absolutely free from any of the affectations and poses which get grafted on to most film stars, and never suffered from attacks of artistic temperament. Under her golden curls she had a lot of practical common sense, and no business magnate could have had a keener judgment or a sounder grasp of affairs. In her early twenties she was producing her own films. She was very generous and did not mind spending money, but she was not extravagant, certainly not by Hollywood standards, and she told me that she always saved a large proportion of her income.

"I have no illusions about my own future," she once said to me in her sensible, matter-of-fact voice. "I can't always stay a little girl, and I don't see myself playing other parts, or at least not with the same success. That is why I am careful to put money by for a rainy day."

I never knew anyone so full of *joie-de-vivre*; she was so interested in everything she did that she made others interested; one could never have a boring moment in her society. When she came to be fitted she would bring something of her own radiant happiness into the studio; she would flit about the room like a bird, draping herself in the materials, trying out new dancing steps, bubbling over with animation all the while.

I remember one lunch I had with her, and how much she made me enjoy it. Yet she talked about nothing in particular; we discussed her new dresses, and the puppy somebody had given her; she told me of its droll attempts to learn tricks, and the collar and lead she had bought for it, in fact all sorts of trivialities;

yet I came away with the impression that I had taken part in a most interesting conversation. What she had talked about had interested her, she had taken for granted that it would amuse me, and consequently it had.

At the time I met her she was an ardent believer in the New Thought movement which was gaining so many followers in America. She told me that if she ever wanted anything to happen she always made a mental picture of it and concentrated on it. No matter how many discouragements she met with, and how impossible her wish seemed, she always kept the picture steadily in her mind. She believed that this system always brought about what she wanted.

She laughed over the example she gave me. When she and her sister had been poor and unknown in New York both of them had longed ardently for a motor, but as they were the children of humble parents there did not seem much likelihood of their ambition ever being realized. To console themselves the two little girls used to play what they called "the limousine game" every day. Mary, as the imaginary owner of the car which grew more luxurious with every flight of imagination, would solemnly go through the pantomime of getting into it (the car being represented by four chairs placed back to back), while her sister, in the rôle of footman, spread an imaginary rug over her, and made a great show of opening the door.

We were sitting in her beautiful Rolls-Royce when she told me this little story, and she laughed as she leant back among the cushions.

"You see I have got the car now," she concluded. "I know that it is not a very good illustration of my theory because we were only children at the time, but the principle is the same. We made our mental picture and we got our wish."

When America came into the War Mary Pickford

raised hundreds of thousands of pounds towards the War Loan. She toured all over the States addressing mass meetings, selling Liberty Bonds. Nobody could resist the claims of patriotism when they were put forward by "the world's sweetheart", and her wide-opened hazel eyes were guaranteed to make even the most hard-headed business man part with his money.

I designed her a special dress to wear on this tour; it was in khaki-coloured cloth, and had a semi-military cut, which was both apt and becoming. It certainly served its purpose, for Mary and the dress used to draw subscriptions of four and five million dollars at a single bid in most of the big towns she visited.

Turning the leaves of my picture-album again I see the portrait of Billie Sunday.

Billie Sunday was one of those amazing revivalists who every now and then arise in America. When I first heard of him he was converting thousands of New Yorkers from the Four Hundred down to the stevedores and labourers who used to throng his meetings. Society, at first inclined to scoff, was confounded when the Rockefellers joined the ranks of his supporters and built him a wooden tabernacle on Riverside Drive.

Twenty thousand people used to attend his meetings on Sunday nights, and there would be extraordinary scenes of fervour which culminated in a sort of religious fervour. Women would tear their jewels off and throw them on the floor and there would be four or five hundred penitents, many of them in evening dress, kneeling at the benches at the end of the service.

I heard stories of these meetings and was filled with curiosity to get to know the man whose personality had lit this flame of revival throughout the States, especially as I was told he was very attractive and not at all sanctimonious to talk to.

Eventually I got a doctor of my acquaintance, who knew him personally, to promise to introduce him to

me. I was invited to come to the following Sunday's meeting, and, to my surprise, was given a seat on the platform between Rockefeller and the revivalist's wife. Mrs. Sunday was quite different from what I had imagined the wife of such a man would look like. She was very smartly dressed in the latest fashion, and had the right shade in powder and lipstick.

I never saw anything so marvellously staged as that meeting. It was a triumph in atmosphere. The vast crowds were worked up to fever pitch long before Billie Sunday appeared on the platform. They began by singing hymns, softly at first, then in a rising tide, broken by cries of "Hallelujah", until the whole audience was rocking and swaying in time to the music, which was provided by two pianos played by men who might have been celebrated pianists. First one would take up the melody, then the other, and the harmonies they introduced made even the most hackneyed hymn tunes sound wonderful. Then a man, who was greeted with rapturous cries of "Roddy" (I never knew his real name), took his place on the platform. He was an extraordinarily eloquent preacher, and soon the enormous hall seemed full of cries and groans of penitence. Then there was again singing, with the singers growing more emotional every minute, and finally, in a hush in which you could have heard the proverbial pin drop, Billie Sunday walked on to the platform.

I watched him take command over those thousands of people and wondered what his secret power was until I heard him speak. He was a clean-shaven man of, I should think, about forty-five, not very handsome, but with a thoroughly pleasant face and a humorous mouth. He had an exceptionally fine figure, which he made the most of, for his clothes were of the very latest cut. I was told that they were very expensive and were all made by the best English tailor in New York.

His voice was very deep and not particularly musical, but in listening to him I realized his magnetic force. The men and women, who were hanging on his words, were being converted by the man himself, not by his arguments. I am not suggesting that Billie Sunday was a humbug, but I think that had he chosen to lecture on politics, or on anything else, the results would have been much the same.

I have never heard anything like his sermon ; it was amazing. His words shot out at extraordinary speed, tumbling one after the other, but every syllable distinct, homely phrases whose very simplicity lent them a rough eloquence. He never seemed to stand still for two seconds, for he emphasized all his points with rapid movements of his lithe, athletic figure, throwing out first one arm, then the other, turning from side to side, dropping suddenly to his knees and springing up again. Twenty years before he had been one of the best baseball players in America, earning an enormous salary which he gave up to take a small post in the Y.M.C.A. so that he could study to be a preacher, and somehow he brought a suggestion of the playing field to the platform. When he flung back his head and denounced the evils of strong drink one had the impression of a baseball player tackling a tangible opponent.

I met him several times socially after that, for he became one of the lions of New York and society hostesses used to vie with one another to attract him to their parties. Revivals came into fashion, and it was considered more chic to entertain your guests with a little after-dinner preaching than with music. Popular preachers used to stride into the houses of the "Four Hundred", accuse them of dark sins to their faces . . . and be asked to come again.

I turn over the album again and see "Fleurette". Fleurette was a little French girl, a little peasant of the devastated regions. I do not know what has become of

her ; probably she stayed in her village and married some sturdy young peasant, and is the mother of other Fleurettes ; or perhaps she went back to Paris, back to the *atelier* and the mannequins ; maybe she is still showing dresses to rich Americans in the Rue de la Paix.

I am sure she never knew that her name was to become famous all over America, and I do not suppose she knows it still, unless they have told her in Peronne.

It happened like this.

In 1917 my sister, Elinor Glyn, who was doing War work in devastated France, wrote to me of how she had come across Peronne, laid waste by the Germans. At first sight, she said, her fellow-workers had believed the place deserted, for there was not a sign of any living soul. Then they had found a miserable cellar, which was occupied by a family whose only refuge it had been for many weeks.

They had been pathetically grateful for the food which their rescuers distributed to them, and had sat down to enjoy the first good meal they had had for days . . . all but Fleurette.

Fleurette lay stretched out on a sack in one corner, regardless of the savoury odours around her. She was so sound asleep that the peasants had to shake her to arouse her. Stumbling to her feet, she murmured :

“Oh, why did you wake me ? I was having such a lovely dream.”

She was such a beautiful girl that my sister was interested in her. She asked her how she had come to be there, and was told that when War broke out Fleurette, who was a mannequin in Paris, had been on a visit to her parents at Peronne, and had remained with them ever since, sharing their hardships and privations, finally taking refuge with them in the old cellar.

Fleurette's little story took hold of my imagination. It was the story of so many others in suffering France ; I could see that group of refugees huddled together in the cellar, fearing that every screaming enemy shell would wreck their frail hiding-place ; I could guess how poor Fleurette must have longed for the peace and comfort of the showroom in the Rue de la Paix ; and the feel of beautiful silks and chiffons on her tired body instead of the dirty rags which were all that was left of her own clothes.

I wrote to my sister : "Can't I do something?"

Elinor Glyn was Vice-President of the *Sécurité Franco-Americain Pour la France Devastée*, the organization which was helping hundreds of refugees. She was delighted at my proffered help, and begged me to raise some money for her work ; she suggested that I should arrange a series of concerts or theatrical performances in America.

I thought over all sorts of schemes. New York was having a glut of charity shows at that time, plays, concerts, tableaux, they had all been given again and again, until even their most ardent supporters were growing weary. If I were to have any success I must think of something original.

An idea came to me. Why not make Fleurette and her misfortunes tell their story, let her plead for herself ?

Round the theme of the little mannequin dreaming in her cellar I wove a pantomime consisting of a prologue and eight scenes, set to music.

The prologue showed the cellar, where the miserable refugees waited in terror for the bombardment to begin, and where Fleurette slept upon her pile of sacks, unconscious of her surroundings, dreaming of her beloved Paris, and of beautiful clothes she had seen in happier times. I adapted each little scene from the sort of dream I imagined that any mannequin might

have ; a background of leisure and elegance with herself as the central figure, wearing the wonderful dresses she had so often displayed to others.

I showed Fleurette, a glorified Fleurette in my latest creations, having *petit déjeuner* ; going for a walk with her friend Dolores ; choosing new dresses at a *grande couturière's* ; going to a dance ; giving a party at her own house . . . and so on. The final scene showed the poor little girl back again in her cellar waking to realities, while the enemy shells screamed overhead.

It was only a simple plot, but I dressed and staged it perfectly. Each was an exquisite cameo ; I blended my colours as an artist mixes his paints. I was not trying to sell my models, for I did not have to keep before me the consideration of what was suitable to present-day life. I was staging my own production to please myself and at the same time raise money for the French devastated areas. So I could afford to let my imagination run riot in wonderful colours and lines whose symmetry was, I felt, worthy of the old Greek ideals. I know now that it was the most beautiful thing I ever created in my life's work. I called it *Fleurette's Dream in Peronne*.

My caste was recruited from my own mannequins, who were famous for their beauty even in New York, where the standard is perhaps the highest in the world. Phyllis Francatelli, sister of my secretary, and a born mannequin, played the part of Fleurette.

I had one of the best coaches in New York to give them lessons, while I supervised all the details of costumes and lighting.

Then I hired the Little Theatre for a matinée, and sent out invitations with an intimation that there would be a charge of not less than five dollars for each seat in aid of the *Sécuris Franco-Americain Pour la France Devastée*.

The theatre was crowded. New York had heard of Fleurette and was full of curiosity to see her ; Ziegfeld had sold hundreds of tickets for us, I had accounted for the rest.

Just before the show opened I walked on to the stage to make an appeal on behalf of the charity, and explain the story of how my little fantasy came to be written.

CHAPTER TWENTY

I WAS accompanied by my Chow, Mahmud.

I feel that really I ought to have devoted a whole chapter to this staid Chinese gentleman ; he certainly deserves it. I can recall so many stories of him, each of them an epic, at least to dog lovers. However, I must content myself with a few lines of tribute to his memory.

He wore his laurels (none too modestly it must be admitted) in his lifetime, and died a peaceful death at the ripe age of twelve, with his paw in the hand of my prettiest mannequin ; and could any dog ask more ? Certainly not Mahmud, for he had the true Eastern spirit of philosophy, allied to an air of calm dignity, and unruffled contempt for strangers. Mahmud was never involved in a fight, he never lost his temper, he left that for dogs of lesser breed. When they turned upon him he simply walked disdainfully away ; perhaps because his consciousness of superiority made him immune to the sneers of the envious.

Certainly Mahmud had something to pride himself upon. Every night for six months he used to trot to the centre of a brilliantly lighted stage, there to receive the plaudits of the multitude ; round upon round of applause for Mahmud and his valorous deeds. It was enough to turn any dog's head ! I regret to say that far from shunning the limelight, as a gentleman and a hero should have done, he positively revelled in it, and would trot back from the wings to take his curtain with a smug, self-satisfied expression.

Mahmud was a War veteran. When the War broke out I gave my car to the French Red Cross in Paris,

and with it went Mahmud, then in the flower of his youth, and a firm friend of the chauffeur. At first he was only the mascot of his depot. He stayed at headquarters, lived on the fat of the land and generally enjoyed himself. Then one day the car driven by his chauffeur friend did not return. Mahmud pondered over it. He had seen the car set out ; obviously cars which set out ought to return ; they had always done so before. But this car had not returned, and Mahmud was distinctly annoyed about it ; he wanted his supper, and, more than supper, he wanted his friend. Clearly something had to be done about it. Inspiration came to him ; he would go out to find the car.

Everyone was too preoccupied to notice a big, brown Chow slip out of the depot, and trot quietly along the road he had seen the car take. It was not very easy going, for the shells had torn it up time and again, but Mahmud avoided the holes with the instinct of generations of dogs. As he got nearer to the enemy lines the firing began and the racket of heavy guns made the air hideous, but Mahmud did not worry about them. He had heard too much shell-fire to associate it with himself. It was just a harmless diversion in which superior, godlike beings indulged for some obscure reason of their own.

Nobody knew how long the journey took him, but the Red Cross men who told me the story said that his paws were bleeding when he got back to the depot hours later, and he could scarcely drag himself along.

Mahmud found his friend lying helpless and badly injured by his overturned car, which had been struck by part of a shell bursting on the roadway.

Here was a tragedy which had no parallel in his doggy experience. What was to be done ? Anxiously he licked the face of the wounded man, but a feeble movement was his only reward. He tried to drag him

along (they found the marks of his strong teeth in the coat of the wounded man afterwards), but with no success.

By some process of reasoning he arrived at his solution. He would go back to the depot to fetch help.

So down the lonely, shell-swept road he trotted once more, covering the miles between his friend and the depot slowly and painfully. But he did it. A very tired dog limped in and would give nobody any peace with his angry barks. They flung something at him ; he dodged and continued to bark and run backwards and forwards to the door. Then someone remembered Mahmud's friend, and went to look for him. It was discovered that he was missing. Within a few minutes an ambulance was driving over the ground, searching for a wounded man. By the driver sat a big, brown Chow. Fortunately they were not too late.

After this episode there was no keeping Mahmud as a mascot. Clearly his place was among the saviours of mankind. He was promoted to active service. From that time on he went out with the Red Cross men, searching for the wounded at night, and when finally he was returned to me after two years' service he was covered with glory. One of the mannequins, who was coming over to New York, brought him out to me, and he became the greatest pet with all the girls.

That was the little story I told the crowded house at the Little Theatre while Mahmud stood beside me, wagging his tail as though he understood every word of it. He took the storm of applause that followed with complete *sang-froid*. After shell-fire what could hold any terrors for him ?

Mahmud did not finish his War work in France, for he helped to raise thousands of dollars for several War charities. He began it all by getting the sympathies of the audience at that first matinée.

Fleurette's Dream in Peronne had a wonderful reception. From the moment that the curtain went up on the group of refugees huddled in their cellar, while Phyllis as Fleurette, looking almost incredibly lovely, slept on her bed of sacks, the audience followed scene after scene with rapt attention. One by one my mannequins, wearing the dream dresses I had designed, were given an ovation. People stood up and cheered, and the Four Hundred of which the audience was largely composed does not often cheer, and rushed out to buy flowers to throw upon the stage.

As the curtain fell for the last time my arm was grasped by an eager little man. He was the manager who booked the Keith Circuit tours.

"I must have that act just as it is for the halls," he said. "We will pay you anything in reason, on condition that you accompany the tour and take your dog with you."

"How in the world am I going to fit my scenes into your variety programmes?" I asked. "Do you realize that this has taken two and a half hours?"

"Oh, we can manage that," he assured me. "I will speed up your act for you, and condense it all into less than thirty minutes."

I was rather dismayed at the thought of having my beautiful fantasy "speeded up"; however there was no hope for it, and the result was that before the tour began I had learned to show sixty-eight dresses in twenty-eight minutes, and this in spite of several changes of scenery.

The Keith Circuit was what we should call "a number one" tour in England. It took in all the principal towns, with a show every afternoon and night and more often than not three shows a day.

So here was I booked at a salary of £500 a week, £300 for the expenses of the "act", including the

girls' salaries, and £200 for myself and Mahmud. I gave most of mine to various War charities.

The girls thought it the greatest fun in the world to be travelling round the States for the next six months, no regular work in the showrooms, nothing to do but amuse themselves all day with the novel experience of the theatre in the evening, and they were in the highest spirits when we started off.

Our first night was at Washington, and President Wilson was in the audience. He came round afterwards and congratulated me on what he was kind enough to tell me he considered "the best vaudeville show he had ever seen".

Everywhere we met with the greatest appreciation, and people went out of their way to welcome us to whatever town we happened to be visiting. Once I remember we arrived at Cincinnati in a terrific snow-storm. All the luggage, or nearly all of it, for we had each of us a suitcase, missed the connection at the junction, and we were told that it was most improbable that we should get it for three or four days, as the lines were in such a state. So we were faced with either breaking our contract or presenting *Fleurette's Dream* of beautiful frocks without any beautiful frocks!

We were in despair, but there was nothing to be done. We held a hurried consultation at my hotel. Ruby, who was one of the mannequins and my right hand on the tour, ascertained that we had exactly ten of the model dresses with us instead of sixty-eight. And the show was due to begin in less than two hours. We racked our brains for some way out of the difficulty. Suddenly I had an inspiration. I rang up a local draper and explained our predicament. Could he let us have materials so that we could make some sort of a fashion parade, and avoid disappointing our audience, and incidentally losing a considerable sum for the French refugees?

He was kindness itself. Immediately the answer came back that we were welcome to anything in his shop, and on loan only ; he would not even consider payment.

He was as good as his word. In less than ten minutes two taxis arrived laden with piles of materials. Frantically I set to work. I could not cut and spoil the material, for it must all be returned to the shop in perfect condition. Somehow or other I managed to drape it with the aid of pins, tucking in rough edges and sewing it here and there, while the girls worked hard finishing off the make-shift "models". Before the time for our turn arrived we had got together about thirty dresses which, if they were not quite up to my standard, were infinitely more ingenious.

I told the audience what had happened and they took the whole thing with the utmost good-nature and gave us a splendid reception. Fortunately our luggage arrived in time for the next night's performance.

There is a great deal to be said for the life of a variety artiste, I think. I know that in all my life I never spent six months in a more delightful manner. Each town had some new experience. In Cincinnati we lost our clothes ; in Cleveland the men appeared to be the most susceptible in America and deluged us all with love letters ; in Boston Mahmud got lost and was brought back by an enthusiastic escort of little boys who had found him wandering and recognized him as the Chow they had seen in the theatre ; in Pittsburg I met Herbert Hoover, then United States Food Administrator.

He was billed all over the town as one of the speakers at an anniversary dinner, that of the Pittsburg Press Club. There were lots of smart women at the dinner, and I was invited to be one of them. It was to be an "Economy Dinner", for the whole of the

United States was at that time in the throes of an economy campaign.

I still have the menu.

Cream of Tomato Soup	
Celery	Olives
	Broiled Chicken
Stringbeans	Baked Potatoes
Ices	Cake
	Coffee

Not a very long menu for a public banquet!

Across my menu is scrawled "O. K. Herbert Hoover." He wrote it in the middle of somebody's speech.

We went through a long list of speakers, each more solemn and impressive than the last, and I was feeling desperate and thinking that I would welcome any diversion.

At the end of the list came Herbert Hoover's speech. It was both brief and amusing, although his subject was "Economy in Food", which would not have inspired most people to be anything but dull and technical. I began to enjoy it and was quite sorry when he sat down.

Suddenly I was horrified to see the toastmaster approaching my chair. He bent down and whispered that Mr. Hoover was particularly anxious that I should be the next speaker. I knew my name was not on the list, and I had had no intention of making a speech; I did not even know what I was expected to speak on, but evidently the toastmaster took my silence of surprise as consent. Before I could get out a protest he announced in stentorian tones that Lady Duff Gordon would be the next speaker, and would follow Mr. Hoover's address on "Economy in Food" with one on "Economy in Dress in War-time". There was nothing for it but to get up and do my best.

I fear I rather scandalized the audience, for instead of the speech they had expected from me I began :

“Ladies and Gentlemen, the first thing I am going to tell you is that I don’t believe in economy in dress at any time, and above all not in war-time.”

Then I went on to tell them that I thought it was the duty of every wife, sweetheart and mother to spend as much on dress as they could possibly afford in order to make the best of themselves for the sake of the men in the trenches.

“After all the men don’t want to come back to frumps, do they?” I said. “And just think how fascinating the French women are. You simply can’t afford to neglect your appearance.”

It was a very unorthodox speech at an economy dinner, but it certainly amused them. As I went back to my seat I apologized to Herbert Hoover for not supporting his economy campaign in a better way. He burst out laughing and patted me on the back.

“Never mind, my dear, you have done very well,” he said.

Wherever we gave our show we topped the bill, and I was allotted number one dressing-room, and the best place on the programme. At one town Sophie Tucker was appearing in the same week, but she was number three on the bill, for although she was popular then she was not nearly so famous as she became afterwards. She gave the most amazing turn I have ever seen.

During the six months we played in eighteen different towns. On two occasions I was made to forfeit my entire salary for not being absolutely punctual to the minute, so that the act had to proceed without my little opening speech. Being late for your turn is the one unforgivable sin in American vaudeville, for the audience must never be kept waiting even for five

minutes. Even Sarah Bernhardt had to conform to this rule when she was in America, although she used to fret and work herself up into a temper over it. In Paris she thought nothing of keeping the audience at her own theatre waiting for thirty or forty minutes, or even longer, but such was their reverence for her that they never dreamt of complaining. She once told me of the terrific quarrel she had with the manager of one theatre who had threatened to fine her. He must have been a brave man !

All through the tour we got splendid Press notices. One critic wrote :

"It is Lady Duff Gordon the artist, not Lady Duff Gordon the dress designer, who is revealing herself in *Fleurette's Dream at Peronne*. In just this subtle distinction lies the value of the entertainment. It is in no sense a fashion show. It is a series of exquisite pictures, imaginative conceptions, each one of which expresses some special phase of the artist's appreciation of colour, of light and of the significance of line."

It is difficult for me to express what colour has meant in my life. It has almost been my religion ; for I see all beauty in terms of it. Badly blended colours are as painful to me as discords played on a piano are to musical people.

I do not think any of us realize how important colour is to us physically and mentally ; it is a science we know so little of. Yet I am quite sure that certain colours have an affinity with certain people, and, therefore, have a psychological effect when they are worn by them.

Take purple for instance. It is one of the most beautiful of all shades ; it is the colour of passion and romance. But to me it always seems a disturbing colour, it stands for tragedy, there is mourning mixed with its passion. Isadora Duncan, the most tragic woman I have known, loved purple and always wore

it, so did the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, and Marie Antoinette.

I have never understood why green should be called unlucky, although I know many people have this superstition, and as a dress designer I had often to give way to it, for I was constantly meeting women who would not have even a green ribbon on their clothes.

Lily Langtry was superstitious about green, and, although it was a colour which suited her perfectly, she never could rid herself of the impression that it brought her ill-fortune. Whenever she yielded to the temptation of buying something green, she told me, something unpleasant occurred shortly afterwards. Curiously enough as a young girl in Jersey she had been very fond of green and had worn it a great deal without any ill effects, and it was King Edward, who was himself very superstitious, who taught her to distrust its unlucky qualities.

To me it has always been the very reverse ; it was God's choice for a world that badly needed rest ; it is the colour of renewing, of re-birth. In France it is always used as the symbol of hope, hence the green caps of the little Catherinettes, donned in honour of the patron saint of old maids.

Blue stands for purity, for love, too, but for a very different love from that of purple ; blue is for homely love, and peaceful, happy things. It is a colour all men love, and they will generally prefer a simple little home-made dress in blue to a model from one of the great houses in another colour ; that is if it is worn by a woman it suits, for there are some women who ought never to wear it. Nothing looks more incongruous than a pale blue dress worn by a very sophisticated-looking woman. One curious thing about blue is that it is not a good colour for an invalid.

I remember that Elinor Glyn's daughter was once

very ill in Paris, and for some time it was thought that she would not recover. She lay in a beautiful bedroom with hangings of soft blue tapestry and blue carpet ; there was blue everywhere, for it was her favourite colour. At last when a formidable galaxy of doctors had practically given her up, my sister sent for a young specialist of the very modern and unorthodox school, who was reputed to have effected some wonderful cures. Our faith in his skill was rather shaken when we observed that he looked first of all at the bed and its hangings and the walls and carpet before turning his attention to the patient.

"There is far too much blue in this room," he said. "She gets no encouragement to get well in it."

He sent out at once for some bright, yellow curtains and a yellow coverlet for the bed, and ordered us to take away the blue hangings . . . and incredible as it sounds, she began to get well from that day.

Yellow is, I think, the luckiest colour of all. It is the colour of effort and vitality ; it draws happy things to it. Scarlet is the colour of passion, but a transient passion ; it is the colour of Carmen's flower, not of the great lovers of the world. Scarlet is a wanton.

Very often I would make colour the theme of the little speech with which I opened every performance of *Fleurette's Dream*. Americans are always ready to grasp any new theory and my colour philosophy was discussed in the Press all over the States.

I was quite sorry when the tour came to an end, although my presence was badly needed at the studio in New York. I got back to find the city in the grip of the appalling epidemic of influenza, which later swept over Europe. Nobody seemed to know what caused it ; it had broken out suddenly and in less than ten days was raging with almost the violence of a medieval plague. Theatres and cinemas were closed,

businesses were carried on somehow with seventy per cent of the staff absent, men and women would fall down in the streets and be carried to the hospitals insensible. I believe that the percentage of fatal cases was actually higher than in London. You would go out to dine one night and a few days later would hear that three or four members of the party had been attacked by it.

I remember being one of the guests at a little dinner-party given by Constance Collier and her husband, Julian L'Estrange; the others were Mr. Merritt, editor of the *Sunday American*, and a young Russian artist. Within a week Julian L'Estrange and the Russian were dead and Mr. Merritt had only just escaped with his life.

It was at this time that I lost my dearest friend. He died in Washington, where the epidemic was worse than anywhere else. He was only ill a few hours and died before I could reach him. I shall never lose the memory of the utter desolation I felt when I arrived at the station there, knowing I was too late, and that only the last poor comfort of seeing him laid to rest remained to me.

When I got out of the train the entire platform appeared to be covered with coffins, there was only just space to walk between them. My porter, who was garrulous, as people always seem to be when one is in great sorrow, told me that they were the coffins of the recruits who had died at the huge training camp in Washington. They were waiting to be dispatched to hundreds of sorrowing homes all over the States. For many days, he told me, there had been about the same number, sometimes more. The toll of the influenza was almost as terrible as that of the War.

So it was to a saddened New York that the news of the Armistice came, and the coming of it came as an anti-climax.

By some means or other, it was never quite established how, New York got the false report of the declaration of the Armistice four days before it was a *fait accompli*, and celebrated wildly, with the result that the official news, when it arrived, was robbed of all its effect.

On the Thursday preceding the fateful Monday, the eleventh of November, New York went mad, individually and collectively. Old men let off fireworks and waved flags, staid fathers of families kissed young women who were perfect strangers to them in the street, and other people threw down from their windows half their worldly goods, or at least such as were portable, on the heads of the passers by. The city streets were littered with stacks of papers thrown down from office windows by irresponsible members of the staff in the first exuberance of their rejoicing. Some of them were of value to their respective firms, and it was funny to see grave, elderly head clerks rooting among the rubbish to try and retrieve them.

The day passed in an orgy of celebration. I was one of the celebrators like everyone else, and gave all the girls in my workrooms unlimited champagne . . . then towards evening the news leaked out. The rejoicing had been premature, no Armistice had been declared.

New York went home to bed with its tail between its legs ! We all felt desperately disappointed, and secretly rather silly. Uncomfortably we all began to remember the foolish things we had done during that day of celebration ; we should not have even given them a thought had we not heard that there had been no Armistice ; but as it was the whole complexion of the day had been changed. We all wanted to forget about it.

Then four days later came the official news. Here was really the excuse for celebrating, as England anp

every other allied country was celebrating . . . but, nobody wanted to celebrate. We tried to work ourselves up again, but it was no use ; the champagne had gone flat, or perhaps there were no more things left to throw. Anyhow, whatever the reason, immensely relieved as we all were, November the eleventh of nineteen eighteen passed rather heavily in New York.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

PEACE had come to a chastened America.

The winter of 1918 was not a very happy one for anybody. The proportion of men lost during the short time the army of the United States was in the field had been terrific; war had taken merciless toll of a nation young and unpractised in warfare. Even the homecoming of thousands of husbands and sons was shadowed by the thought of those who had been left on the battlefields of Europe.

There was only one impulse—to forget. Everyone was restless; people wanted to be in any place except the one where they happened to be. Old men and women who had lived all their lives in small towns in the Middle West sold their houses and came to New York, city dwellers went to the country, or took sea voyages. Young people went to victory balls, danced all night, got hilariously drunk, and went to bed in somebody else's house.

Elderly men let off a lot of steam in their clubs arguing over the question of War debts and reparations, and discussing what the Allies would do to the Kaiser. Travel agents made plans for a record summer of tours to Europe and sent out alluring prospectuses, and opportunists foresaw that living would shortly become cheap in Germany, and hoped it would be possible to go there. Almost every week a new craze came out, the newspapers were full of them, new forms of religion, new forms of art, new music. Night clubs sprang up like mushrooms, the saxophone blared forth its message of jazz.

But in spite of it all no one was happy. Those who

were not under the spell of hectic gaiety were bored and listless, doctors were puzzled at the increase in neurasthenia ; psychologists tried out a dozen different theories ; somebody brought over the phrase *le caffard*.

For myself, I was more tired than I have ever been in my life. I was designing for all four houses, London, Paris, New York and Chicago, working day and night creating dresses which were to make other women beautiful, while my heart felt heavy as lead. With the death of the dear friend who had meant so much to me something seemed to have gone out of my life. I suddenly realized that I was terribly lonely ; I was making thousands of pounds, but I had no desire to spend them. For the first time since the days when I had cut out dresses in the dining-room in Davies Street and dreamt of being a famous dressmaker I had lost interest in my business.

The memory of what Ellen Terry had told me years before came back to me.

"No woman is ever completely satisfied with a career, however well she does in it," she had said. "Believe me you will find that out one day. There is an awful morass waiting for us all to fall into when we realize that what we have always called our life's work is of no importance after all."

"Then what is really important ?" I had asked her, and she had thought a moment before answering slowly :

"I suppose love and one's children. The women who have nine or ten children are the happiest of all. Physical creation is the only creation which gives a woman any lasting satisfaction, because she is in harmony with Nature. If you give yourself to another sort of creation, poetry or music or drama, or even creating beautiful clothes as you do, you have to pay the price of it, and it is often more painful than physical travail."

I had thought so little of her words at the time

because then my work had been everything to me, but they came back to me that winter in New York. I knew so well then what she had meant, the feeling of loneliness and dissatisfaction that descends upon one suddenly in the very moment of success.

I made up my mind that I would shake it off. *Tout passe*, I told myself every morning as I drove down to the studio, and I flung myself into my work, shutting out thought for at least a few hours.

I had plenty to keep me occupied. I designed the trousseaux for some of the most talked-of weddings of the year. For one bride I chose a Russian wedding. Her dress and that of her bridesmaids, with heavily embroidered sleeves and high crowns to which were attached the traditional veils, set a fashion and after that every other wedding was more or less Russian for the next six months. Incidentally it brought in the vogue of the Russian boot, which spread to London and Paris, became a craze, and still remains with us in a more or less modified form.

I also dressed several shows for Ziegfeld at this time. One of them was the famous "Jewel Pageant", which created such a sensation at the "Midnight Frolics".

It was inspired by the most popular jewel fad of the moment in New York, a bracelet which spelt "D.E.A.R.E.S.T." Every woman who could possibly afford it (they were an expensive little fantasy) wore one. They were composed of diamonds, emeralds, amethysts, rubies, sapphires and topaz, in a pattern which formed the letters of the word.

Ziegfeld wanted something new for his Frolics and asked me whether I could dress a "Dearest Bracelet" number. So many girls were to represent each stone, and he wanted me to design costumes which would create a perfect setting for the jewels they were to wear.

This was work after my own heart. I have always loved precious stones, and the thought that I was to have practically *carte blanche* in weaving them into a beautiful fantasy, a riot of colour, was an inspiration to me. I set to work at once. In a few weeks all the costumes were ready and Ziegfeld was delighted.

"It will be the most wonderful thing I have ever staged," he said.

It was. New York talks of it still. Worn by some of the greatest beauties in the world, the dresses I had designed were like a vision from the Arabian Nights. Diamonds first, filmy white chiffon, on which hung cascades of gleaming stones, a girdle of them clasped the slender hips of the wearers; dark emeralds next, a deep green on which the jewels were woven into a pattern of leaves; then came amethysts, then wicked-looking rubies, pale emeralds, an exquisite leaf green; sapphires of the blue you see in the windows of York Minster, the stones forming an intricate vine leaf pattern on the long draperies; then topaz.

The stones with which I had covered my dresses were, of course, imitation, but each girl wore the real stones on her neck and wrist, or round her ankles. They were lent by a noted jeweller for the production, and their entire value was said to be over a hundred thousand pounds. Special detectives were on duty the whole time they were worn in the scene, and the jewels used to arrive each day in charge of the jeweller's assistants, who were protected by an armed guard.

The "Dearest Bracelet" scene was the last spurt of my flagging energies. I knew that the time had come for me to take a rest. I could no longer control all the four houses, and continue with the designing at the same time unless I had help.

I made one of the greatest mistakes of my life. I listened to the man who was later to bring about

the complete ruin of "Lucile", the business to which I had devoted the best years of my life.

This man, a Jewish wholesale manufacturer, had for months been trying to induce me to sell him "Lucile's", but I had always refused. I loved my work, I did not want to give it up. But there were letters of criticism from the partners in London.

"You are an artist; you have no more idea of business than a child," they wrote. "You ought to see your work from the angle of a hard-headed business man."

I was tired of hearing it . . . very well, they should have the "hard-headed business man".

The Jewish manufacturer repeated his proposals. I still held out against giving over my whole business. Then he changed his offer. Would I let him have it, but retain a certain number of shares myself, on condition that I continued to design most of the models? I welcomed this. It seemed the ideal solution. I could go on with the only part of the business that had ever really interested me, creating the clothes I loved, but without the worry and responsibility of it all. I had never really been a business woman. In the Davies Street days I had begun making dresses to keep myself and my little daughter, but far more than that because I was happy in the making of them. I had watched my business grow and delighted in it, but I had never mastered its technical side. I was a designer, that was all.

So I made up my mind with my usual impulsiveness. It actually took me five minutes to decide upon the step which was going to change my whole life, and the Jewish manufacturer became "Lucile", and a very tired Lucy Duff Gordon stepped out of the director's chair and became only a paid member of the staff.

I do not intend to write much of what happened to "Lucile's", there is too much bitterness left still,

and I do not believe in wasting good ink in vain regrets. The past is finished, and it is a mistake to look back on the false steps one has made, for it is altogether too discouraging. There is a great truth behind the parable of Lot's wife !

A few weeks after giving over the reins of "Lucile's" I realized that I had been very unwise. The two branches in America, New York and Chicago, which had stood firm and solid all through those War-time years, were the first to reflect the changed conditions. New designers were engaged to turn out less expensive models.

I saw what was happening, but I was too weary to care very much. If they wanted to change the character of the American branches, let them ; I had still Hanover Square and the Paris branch. I would go back to Europe and design my models there. A wave of homesickness had come over me. I wanted to go back to England, I longed for my own people. It would be good, I told myself, to see Tiverton and Flavia, the grandchildren who had been babies when I had last seen them. Cosmo and my daughter had begged me to come home in every letter they had written me since the Armistice.

I thought of London, which I had last seen just before the War broke out. I could picture Hanover Square with the cars drawn up outside "Lucile's", and everybody choosing gowns for Ascot. I must go back to London.

And from London I would cross over to Paris. The chestnut trees would be just bursting into bloom in the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, the garden of the Pavilion Mars would be at its loveliest with the lilacs in flower. I had had a letter from my old caretaker to say that the officers who had been billeted there during the War had left it in perfect condition ; it was only waiting for me to occupy it again.

So I booked a passage on the next boat, and with Hebe and some of the other girls I sailed for Europe.

When I stepped off the boat I felt rather like a female Enoch Arden ; it was so long since I had been in England. I began to wonder, for the first time, whether things would have changed much during the years.

I was met by the whole family, Cosmo, my daughter and her husband, even the children. They took possession of me, and for the next few weeks I was allowed to do nothing but enjoy life, rest and pay a round of visits.

Then, one day I slipped off by myself to Hanover Square and paid a visit to Lucile's. The familiar line of cars was outside the door, the soft, grey carpets were unchanged, and everything looked as it had done when I had last seen it.

The commissionaire was new. He did not know me and directed me very politely into my own show-room, where Celia and Margaret gave me a great welcome.

They were not very enthusiastic about the business. Everyone was in the midst of a wave of economy, and people were buying as few clothes as possible. It was difficult to get silks, for half the looms in Lyons were idle and others had just restarted ; the colours were very bad, and it took weeks to get orders executed. The only thing to be done was to make the models as cheaply as we could and wait until conditions settled down to normal.

So I took possession of my studio once more, but although I made a number of models I was still restless and my work was desultory. I decided to go over to Paris, for I was sure that Paris would still be interested in clothes ; I told myself so many times in the train. The Parisian temperament, always more volatile than the Saxon, would, I thought, recover from the after-effects of the War far sooner.

But I was wrong. If I had found London changed, Paris was infinitely more so. I realized it the moment I got outside the Gare du Nord. Was this drab, dispirited city the Paris I had known? I could hardly believe it. Everyone looked anxious and unhappy, everyone was more or less shabby; the men and women one passed in the streets seemed always in a hurry and always out of temper. I missed the laughing crowds, the *joie-de-vivre* and the leisurely elegance of the other Paris. Even the Paris of the early days of the War had seemed less remote from it than this city with its influx of foreigners, mostly English and Americans, its high prices and its badly-dressed crowds.

The franc had fallen to nearly half its pre-War value, yet wages were still paid for the most part at pre-War rates, based on the former standard. The cost of living was very high. There was poverty and discontent everywhere. And on the top of it all floated the new-rich, the War profiteers, who seemed to have unlimited money. These and the South Americans kept alive the luxury trade of France at that time, for there was no limit to their extravagance. They were desperately unpopular with everyone except the tradespeople, who thrived on their money; the old *noblesse* despised them and the lower classes hated them. The son of a rich cocoa manufacturer nearly caused a riot by attempting to light his cigar with a mille franc note in Lyons, where at that time there was terrible poverty.

The Russian refugees had come over in great force, most of them with appalling tales of suffering. One was constantly meeting women of the highest family who had only managed to save enough money to get to Paris after months of prostitution on the streets of Constantinople. A few who had had jewels to sell, and had succeeded in getting them out of Russia, had been more fortunate. None of them had any

settled plan except to reach Paris and find some work.

Paris was hospitable, she did her best for them. Slowly they were absorbed into her army of workers. They sold antiques and *bibelots*, opened Russian tea-shops and restaurants, and made Russian cooking fashionable. The youngest and prettiest of the women became mannequins and saleswomen in the salons of the *grandes couturières*; one or two drifted into Montmartre and became cabaret singers or dancers.

The men did everything and anything from acting as tutors to rich Americans to driving taxis and playing in *balalaika* orchestras. Somehow or other they managed to eke out a living, and at night they would all meet in a restaurant just off the Faubourg St. Honoré and dream of a Russia once more in the hands of the Royalists, and make plans and hatch plots which, alas, came to nothing. And Paris, having seen so many plans vanish in smoke, looked on with a kindly, tolerant eye, and said nothing.

This, then, was the post-War city I had to adjust myself to, a city of changed values, of the poverty of the many, and the immense wealth of a very few. I would sell a dress one day for five thousand francs to a South American, to whom it seemed a small sum, and the next day a Frenchwoman would regretfully refuse it at two thousand. In the end I learned to use the argument of "what you lose on the swings you save on the roundabouts", and charged the South American six thousand and the Frenchwoman one thousand.

It was impossible to make even half of our pre-War profits, for so few people had the money to spend large sums on dress. The old standard of extravagant dressing had gone for ever; it passed away with the day of the great courtesans, whose whims and follies had so delighted the Parisians of 1912. Even the women who were noted as the best dressed in Europe

had cut down their dressmakers' bills to half the previous amounts. There was consternation in the Rue de la Paix. World-famous houses were faced with the prospect of closing down.

Something had to be done about it; there was need for drastic measures. The great *couturières*, the leaders of fashion, took counsel among themselves.

There was only one remedy, they must cut down the cost of production to the lowest possible limit. There must be no more "picture dresses" with trailing yards of lovely satins and brocades, no more filmy chiffon dresses veiling heavy silk underslips, no more waste of material even on linings. Lace must be taboo, so must expensive embroideries; hats must be plain and practically untrimmed. Every yard of material saved must be looked upon as a yard to the good. It was, they said, the only plan to work on.

But the new measures must be inaugurated with tact. No *couturier* could possibly say in effect to his clients, "I am going to dress you as cheaply as possible," such a thing would be an outrage to feminine vanity. No, there must be a flourish of trumpets, women must be made to feel that the revolutionary styles were the last word in *chic*.

The Rue de la Paix is nothing if not resourceful. It brought in the ideal of "the boyish woman". Here was the perfect solution of the problem. Slight figures covered with three yards of material, skirt ending just below the knees, tiny cloche hat trimmed with a band of ribbon.

No woman, at least no woman in civilization, could cost less to clothe! And best of all the women were delighted with the new presentation of themselves. They improved on the idea, shingled their hair, adopted boyish mannerisms and slang and flew to the cocktail bar (long, silk-stockinged legs looked so well dangling from a high stool). Critics wrote learnedly of the

"modern girl's emancipation" and the older generation were harsh in their condemnation. But neither the "modern" nor her critics knew that she was a creation of the dressmakers, just as much as the clothes she wore, and all because some solution had to be found to the problems of the Rue de la Paix !

You see, all dressmakers know that women are in many ways an expression of their clothes. Put a woman into a certain type of dress and she will instinctively find a pose to wear it. The straight-backed rigidity of the Victorian reflected those dreadful straight-backed corsets they wore. Had you put the whole generation into other garments you would have produced a different womanhood. The wearers of the boyish post-War dresses had to live up to them by adopting a boyish pose. The clothes of to-day, which are growing more feminine, are giving us a sweeter, more feminine woman ; the graceful, long skirts, which have come back at least for evening wear, are restoring something of the dignity and repose which we lost just before the War.

But to return to Paris.

I was happy enough at the Pavilion Mars, for I loved Versailles, and knew every inch of the Palace and its grounds. I used to spend whole days wandering about the gardens whenever I could spare the time from my work. Indeed I was so familiar with the Palace that I remember one of the guardians pointing me out to some American visitors with the remark that I knew more of the history of Versailles than he did.

One day I was showing two Americans, still in uniform, the wonderful Galerie des Glaces in the Palace of Versailles where the Peace Treaty was signed, and at the "Salon de la Paix" end of the great Galerie we came upon a little man painting a large picture. He was in a shabby and dirty English

uniform and looked cold and miserable. I took him for an ordinary Tommy, but when I looked at his picture I was surprised at the skill and beauty revealed there. Before the War I knew all the artists who came to paint Versailles, the garden, the statuettes, the parterres and the fountains, but I had never seen any of them attempting the Galerie des Glaces. I looked again at the shabby little soldier and said, "Well, my man, you're certainly some artist!" He seemed pleased by my praise and we started talking.

As it was nearing lunch time and he looked so cold and hungry I invited him to join us. He seemed delighted and I brought him home with us. Imagine my consternation when, in answer to my question, he told me he was William Orpen!

After that I saw him often and used to carry him a hot water bottle to keep his feet warm while he finished the picture on which he was engaged when I told him he was certainly "some artist" and which is now one of his most famous—"The Signing of the Peace Treaty".

Best of all I loved the Petit Trianon, with its memories of Marie Antoinette. I was always very interested in the story of the ghost of the poor Queen which had been seen by so many people, but although I was very anxious to see it myself and often stayed long after sunset in the haunted room, I never succeeded in doing so. The guardian, who knew me well, would let me stay there as late as I liked and I used to leave by a little side door afterwards. He, like me, was anxious to see the ghost and told me that he had once passed the whole night in the Queen's salon, where it was supposed to appear, but had seen and heard nothing.

Curiously enough only a few days after telling me this story he was arranging some furniture in the room when he looked up and sitting in a chair opposite

him he distinctly saw Marie Antoinette. She was not crying and wringing her hands as the Versailles ghost was reported to do, but looked, he told me, smiling and happy, and in every way like an ordinary woman, not unsubstantial and wraith-like. Her flesh appeared to have the texture of perfect health and he saw the sheen of her silk dress in the sunlight (the apparition occurred in broad daylight). She sat thus for quite a minute while he watched her, then without the effect of any dramatic disappearance she was no longer there. The chair was empty.

After this I redoubled my efforts to see the ghost and sat in the salon at all hours of the day and night, but without success.

The Pavilion Mars was a beautiful type of an Empire house, which had belonged to the famous Mdlle Mars, actress of the Comédie Française and mistress of Napoleon. People who were interested in the Empire period used to come far and wide to see it.

One of the visitors I entertained there was Queen Marie of Roumania, who spent a day with me while she was staying in Paris. She is a keen student of history and was delighted with both the house and the garden, where we had tea. She brought with her her son, Prince Nicholas, who appeared greatly in awe of his mother. He scarcely addressed a word to anyone during the whole time they were there, except when the Queen and her lady-in-waiting left us for a few minutes, when he seemed to relax from the state of tension he had been in, and chatted away to me in a delightful manner.

Another visitor I had there was Blasco Ibanez, the great Spanish novelist. He was an untidy, rather gross man, coarse in appearance, very different from the spiritual philosopher one would have expected. It was just at the time that his film, "The Four Horsemen

of the Apocalypse", was being shown at all the cinemas, and everyone was talking of Rudolph Valentino, who had leapt into fame through his performance in the principal part. Women especially were raving over him, from my mannequins, who used to collect every portrait of his they could find, to rich Americans, who used to send him wonderful presents.

I remember one woman particularly, the wife of a Chicago millionaire. She was young and good-looking, and her husband was indulgent even for an American. She was, I believe, perfectly happy in a placid easy way until she saw the film and promptly fell in love with Rudolph Valentino.

She went to the cinema again and again, and in the meantime thought of nothing but the way in which she might bring about a meeting with this incredibly handsome Italian boy. Finally she decided to write to him and did so. The letter was not answered. She wrote again, and still again; she sent presents, socks, ties, a dressing-gown, which cost two hundred dollars. He wrote her a charming but quite formal letter of thanks, but it transported her to the seventh heaven. By this time she had become hopelessly bored with the kind but uninspired husband, and after leaving him a note, she took the train for Hollywood, determined to force the situation with Rudolph Valentino. The film star, who had become accustomed to the adoration of thousands of women, took her devotion as a matter of course, but was not in the least interested, in fact he gave her a very polite *congé*. Impervious to snubs she remained in Hollywood, following him about whenever she could get knowledge of his movements, writing him the most passionate letters, sending him flowers, wine, cigars, in fact anything she could think of.

The poor husband, distressed at the loss of his wife and humiliated at the gossip she was causing, arrived in Hollywood and endeavoured to persuade

her to return to Chicago with him. He sought and finally obtained an interview with Valentino, who assured him, and quite truthfully, that he had no wish whatsoever to rob him of his wife, and that he would be actually relieved if the lady would leave Hollywood.

Eventually, although she refused to return to him, the husband was able to persuade her to go on a cruise to Europe. While she was staying in Paris she came to me for a number of dresses, and incidentally told me the whole story of her infatuation for Rudolph Valentino. She used to come to see me day after day, each time paying my special consultation fee, which amounted to twenty pounds, so that she might talk about him. I told her quite frankly that so many consultations were not necessary to design her dresses, but she replied that the money was of no importance and she was lonely in Paris. Every day long letters used to be sent to Valentino, and parcels, containing all sorts of presents, cigarette-cases and valuable antiques and jewellery, were dispatched regularly to Hollywood.

On the surface the story had all the elements of comedy, the amorous woman, the indifferent film star and the injured husband ; in reality it was a tragedy. This woman who all her life had had every wish gratified was inconsolable over her failure to attract the man on whom she had centred her love. Her face grew haggard and wretched as the weeks passed and there was no letter from him.

Eventually she returned to the States and I was horrified to read one morning of her death from an overdose of a sleeping draught.

I never met Rudolph Valentino, but I knew more than one woman who would have gone through fire for a smile from him. He seemed to have a curious fascination for women of all types ; they all saw in

him the wonderful exotic lover of their dreams. Yet the woman who Valentino himself loved best of all, and whom he married, was not, as I remember her, either very exotic or even very beautiful.

Years before anyone had heard of the famous film star I used to know a little girl in Paris named Winifred de Wolfe, the stepdaughter of Elsie de Wolfe's brother. She was a slim, graceful little creature with big dark eyes and a wide mouth, very shy and rather lonely. She was at a finishing school in Versailles and I used often to take her out with me to theatres and an occasional lunch or dinner at one of the smart restaurants. As I got to know her better I found that she was the most romantic child one could imagine, she lived in a dream world of her own.

"I would do anything on earth for someone who is beautiful," she once told me. "Some day I shall meet some man like a fairy prince and love him for ever and ever."

Winifred grew up and then there was consternation in the family, for they discovered that the apparently meek and thoroughly conventional little daughter had very definite ideas as to what she would do with her life, and meant to stick to them. Winifred's mother had remarried by this time Walter Hudnut, the millionaire, and of course expected her daughter to lead the usual life of a society debutante, balls, parties, winter in Cannes, spring in Florence, and the rest of the year in the States, with the usual string of eligible young men in attendance.

Winifred refused to do this from the very start. It would not interest her in the least, she assured her horrified relations, and she intended to live her life in her own way. There was a great deal of bickering about it all, and finally Winifred took the matter into her own hands and disappeared. For months there was no news from her, and even the most exhaustive

enquiries failed to disclose any trace of her whereabouts.

When she was eventually found she had changed her name to Natacha Rambova and was a member of Kosloff's famous ballet which was creating such a sensation in New York. She was living on a tiny salary, sharing rooms with another girl, but nothing would induce her to return to affluence and the social world from which she had escaped.

A little while afterwards she met and married her "fairy prince", but, alas, she did not live happily ever after with him !

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

NO chronicle touching even ever so lightly on the Paris of those early days after the War would be complete without a portrait of Cécile Sorel ; indeed one might almost say that Sorel at that time was Paris. The hospitable light from the great candelabra of her *appartement* on the Quai Voltaire shone like a beacon in the dimmed glories of Parisian entertaining ; statesmen and diplomats forgot their differences or settled them amicably at her parties.

The first time I met the famous actress was when she came to my studio to ask me to design her dresses for her new play, and I thought then that I had never seen a more fascinating woman. She was not, strictly speaking, beautiful, certainly not pretty ; that hopelessly banal word would have been quite inadequate as a description of her particular compound of wit, allure, and above all, of that indefinable quality which was her charm. She was wearing that day, I remember, a sapphire blue velvet dress with a magnificent silver fox stole, clasped on one shoulder by a single sapphire, an enormous uncut stone which must have been very valuable, like everything else with which she surrounded herself.

Her renaissance *appartement* was filled with wonderful pictures, furniture, curios, jewels, each of them worth a fortune. Her gold bed was famous, her bathroom had been furnished at a cost of fifty thousand francs, her collection of jade was one of the finest in Europe. She was a curious combination of lavish generosity and good bourgeois thrift. She would spend recklessly on giving splendid parties, which

would be thronged by the smartest set in Paris, and the next day she would invite all her family and poor relations "to eat up what was left", as she put it. On the third day the servants would be regaled, and on the fourth the army of beggars, to whom she was a veritable fairy godmother, would come for the remnants of the feast.

She was the most cultured, most intelligent woman one could hope to meet in a generation, yet she could argue and haggle with a tradesman, and what is more, get the better of him over the matter of a few francs.

She once told me that when she had been poor and unknown her great ambition had been to have a salon. She certainly attained it, and became the leader of the most brilliant *coterie* in Paris. Her fine sense of the dramatic enabled her to create a romantic background for herself, and she had a flair for always choosing the best in music, art or literature. Her salons were the rendezvous of all the rising young poets, dramatists and composers, but she never wasted time on the unsuccessful. Her tact was admirable. She had many love affairs, and although her admirers included a prince and a world-famous statesman she refused both.

"I am the last of the great lovers," she once said to me. "Marriage does not attract me."

Yet she married the Comte de Ségur. That was Cécile Sorel.

Of all the dresses I made Cécile Sorel my favourite was a velvet in palest lemon which clung to her figure and followed every movement. I took my inspiration from the classical severity of the old Greek draperies, caught up in beautiful folds on one hip. She wore her clothes with such grace that even the most eccentric fashions, of which she was very fond, looked charming on her.

As a general rule the Frenchwoman has neither



Mme CECILE SOREL
of the Comédie Française, given to me in 1927

the grace nor the distinction of the Englishwoman, but she excels in the art of wearing her clothes, and is more particular over the picture she presents. She will spend hours thinking out her costumes, and more hours standing patiently while she is being fitted for them, studying every movement so that not a tiny seam shall be half an inch out of place. The result is that she is always perfectly turned out, and looks as though her clothes had been moulded on her. She is more afraid of expressing her own individuality in her dressing than the Englishwoman is, and will always follow the prevailing fashion regardless of whether it suits her own type or not, which often puts her at a disadvantage.

I remained in Paris for some years after the War, for I had so much work to do that it would have been practically impossible for me even to take a holiday. English and American tourists poured into France and ordered clothes for the Riviera, for Switzerland, or for the season in London.

Paris began to recover from the effects of the War, hotels were crowded, the luxury shops took heart of grace and put up their prices. In Germany the mark had tottered and fallen ; people who had been there came back with stories of bargains they had secured, fur coats picked up for a few dollars, jewels and dressing-cases at a twentieth part of their cost. They were immensely pleased with their spoil, it served the Germans right, they said, it had been time to teach them a lesson.

Germany, however, had become "uncomfortable", the tourist stream was directed to France. People who had never thought of travelling crossed over from America in every boat ; all classes from millionaires to retired small town shopkeepers were in the grip of a mania for "seeing Europe", money poured into the coffers of France. Almost every day women whom I

had dressed in New York and Chicago came into my studio to ask me to design for them.

Among them was the wife of a wealthy manufacturer, who had brought her daughter over to Europe. They had only a short time in Paris because, as the mother informed me with considerable pride, they were going to spend the season in London. Her daughter, she told me, was going to be presented, and she wished me to design her Court dress and a number of other clothes. Becoming more confidential she explained that they had answered the advertisement of "an English lady of title", who had intimated in the American papers that she would be willing to act as chaperone and arrange social introductions for American visitors during the London season. After several letters had been exchanged the woman, who was in fact a well-known London hostess, had agreed to take charge of them at a cost of £1,000 "to cover the expenses she would be obliged to incur in entertaining for them suitably".

I was shown one or two of the hostess's letters, which certainly contained most alluring bait for snobs, for they touched on the various introductions which could be effected, and hinted at the probability of presentation at Court.

Both mother and daughter departed for London in the highest spirits and taking with them an enormous wardrobe of clothes.

It was some three months before I saw them again, when they came to order more clothes before sailing from Cherbourg, and they were in a very different frame of mind from their previous one. They had not, it appeared, enjoyed their season in London, and they were furiously indignant over what they described as "the way in which they had been cheated out of their money" by their society chaperone. The introductions which had been accomplished had been of a practically

useless nature, "not one real aristocrat among the lot", as the mother said bitterly; for either their hostess's conscience had not allowed her to exploit her friends for their benefit, or she had not considered it necessary to fulfil her promises. The entertaining which had been done on their behalf had been negligible, and the crowning annoyance had been the discovery that there was no possibility of the daughter's presentation. The chaperone, after evasive replies to their eager questions on the subject, had eventually admitted just before the last Court of the season that she had been unable to arrange it.

She had not expected the storm which had broken out. Neither mother nor daughter were of the type which suffers in silence. In the course of what must have been an intensely unpleasant scene they had accused their chaperone of taking their money on false pretences, and threatened to expose the whole scandal. Heedless of her horrified protests they had gone to a solicitor and instructed him to take proceedings against her. Only by refunding half the sum she had received for chaperonage had she been able to keep the case out of the courts.

This affair is by no means without parallel, for although there are society women who act as social chaperones each season to American and Colonial visitors, and are perfectly honourable in fulfilling their obligations, there are others who are far less scrupulous, and who are not above exploiting their protégées in a disgraceful manner. Naturally these things are seldom heard of, for the sufferers for the most part are reticent over their experiences, and return to their own countries without any redress.

I was still in Paris when the new "boyish" fashion, the most startling change since the hobble skirt had been launched, was definitely adopted. The short skirt and the cloche hat had ousted the picture dress

and the wide-brimmed hat and its feathers from the field. The Rue de la Paix rejoiced. It had been an easy victory.

"Women will never go back to the ridiculous clothes of a few years ago," said the high priests and the high priestesses of fashion. "They are only too pleased at being given a neat little dress that is almost like a uniform."

They had forgotten that time does not stand still, and that women, even the most enthusiastic adopters of "the uniform", would tire of it and long once more for the femininity of curls and swirling draperies reaching to the ankle.

The success of the new mode vindicated its creators, they had known the value of a pose, the psychological moment for launching "the modern ideal of womanhood". In Paris, New York, London, the streets were full of slight, boyish figures, clothed in a few yards of material, and a cloche hat. New designers came to the fore, they planted their standards in the most sacred precincts of the Rue de la Paix; young men who flaunted the traditions of the temple of "La Mode" . . . so simple, those little dresses.

Here and there was a dissentient voice, one of the high priests retired in offended dignity after refusing to conform to the new fashions; there was strife between some of the rival houses.

Monsieur A. accused Mdme. B. of vulgarity. The models she was making were, he said, an offence to the whole profession. Since when, might he ask, in the history of dressmaking had women been accustomed to show their knees? Madame's clients were not even content with showing their knees, they were positively showing a space of at least an inch above them!

Mdme. B. shrugged her dainty shoulders and elevated her pretty little nose. Her models, she retorted with vigour, were made for the young and attractive, and,

moreover, for those whose knees were beyond reproach ; naturally it could not be expected that the frumpish dowagers who frequented Monsieur A's establishment would care to adopt anything so frivolous and so entirely charming. As for being vulgar . . . well, it was too much a matter of common knowledge that her clients numbered the most aristocratic families in Europe for such an ill-directed shaft to wound. Was not Monsieur A. aware that her mannequin parades were attended by queens, that an English duke was a constant visitor to her salons, and that many of the dresses worn at the Courts in London were made by her ? Monsieur must think of some other accusation !

The Rue de la Paix is accustomed to take itself seriously. Humour is reserved for the showroom, where it is useful, for instance, to soothe the ruffled feelings of a refractory client, but anyone so misguided as to attempt to apply it to the studio or the work-rooms would be guilty of a grave breach of etiquette. Its amities are conducted with an appropriate dignity, its hostilities have all the solemn formality of an old-time duel.

As the stranger in its midst I was shown a chivalrous courtesy, and after the first resentment at my intrusion, with my supposed band of plain, flat-chested English misses, had been dispelled I was even welcomed to its community. But it was not for me to participate in the controversy of the short skirt versus the long, for when it took place I was on the point of leaving Paris.

For some time I had realized the impossibility of continuing to design for "Lucile's", for the new partnership had not proved a success, and for months there had been a series of disagreements, which culminated in my withdrawing from the business altogether. It was an inevitable step on my part, but it was a very painful one. I had been so happy in my work.

The night before I left Paris I thought over it

all, looking back along the years. I saw myself as I had been, young and confident and full of hope, a little, red-haired girl cutting out models on the dining-room floor, elated at the first orders. I saw the house in Old Burlington Street I had moved into so proudly.

"You must be mad taking a place like that with no capital to safeguard you," people had said. "You can never make it pay."

But I had. I saw the salon in Hanover Square, scene of so many of my triumphs, the first mannequin parade I had staged there . . . Paris, New York, Chicago . . . so many hopes had been built on them all.

When I was packing I came across the crucifix *Grandmère* had given me so many years before. A sudden impulse made me climb the steep stairs to her room under the roof. I had not visited it since her death, but I found that it had not been changed. The same old furniture was there, only it had grown dusty and a little more worn. Something of her presence still lingered there. I remembered the first time I had seen her, a lonely, frightened old woman, terrified that I might turn her out of her only home.

"Ah, madame, it is only the young who like changes," she had said. "When one grows old one learns to dread them."

I understood. I too knew what it was to be afraid of what the future might hold.

I went back to London the next day, and drove straight to the Ritz. For the moment I did not want anyone to meet me. I could not talk business until I had had time to think. I did not know how much money was left to me, but I realized that I, who had all my life been extravagant, must accustom myself to being comparatively poor.

Cosmo came the next day, unfailingly kind as he always was. He had to confirm my fears. Nearly all

my capital had been swallowed up. But he was full of encouragement and had all sorts of plans for me. I put them all on one side.

"Leave me to think it over," I said, and he understood.

A little later the house in Hanover Square was sold. Before it changed hands I asked the agents for the key so that I might go over it for the last time. Cosmo demurred a little. It was a morbid fancy, he said, and would only make me sad, but I would not listen to him. I had the feeling that I should find fresh courage there.

I went through the big, empty showrooms one after the other. They had a dejected look, cobwebs stretched over the wall where the mannequins' stage had been, and the floor over which Dolores and Hebe had trailed their glorious dresses was covered with dust.

Suddenly I laughed, and the young man from the house agents, who had accompanied me to the house and had been observing me with an expression of commiseration, looked acutely embarrassed. I suppose he thought I was going to have hysterics.

"It is nothing," I explained, "only I can't help laughing when I remember that they all told me that I ought to have men with good, solid, business brains to help me. One little woman kept this big place going and three others like it, and made thousands of pounds out of it all. It was only when the 'hard-headed business men' came into it that it all collapsed."

The young man from the agents smiled politely, but he did not understand. I had not expected him to, but the laugh had done me good; with it I had recovered my courage. I began to make plans for the future, though I had poor enough materials to build with. Something had to be done unless I was to retire into the country somewhere to live with poverty and memories for the rest of my days.

I began to write for the papers, articles on dress, and before long I was making sufficient to live comfortably at least, if not luxuriously. I loved writing these articles, for I always felt that they brought me so many friends. Hundreds of girls used to send me letters every week asking my advice on dress and on every sort of problem. "My Dorothys" I called the senders of these simple, affectionate letters, and I always replied to them personally. I have kept many of the letters stored away in boxes to this day.

But all this time although I was interested enough in my excursions into journalism I was longing to design again. I used to read of the new fashions that Paris was launching, and attend other designers' mannequin parades with an absolute longing to be back in the studio once more. I felt my life incomplete with my one special gift lying idle. The days passed pleasantly. I had my writing; I had my daughter and the two grandchildren, who were beginning to grow up, to interest myself in; my mother took up a great deal of my time; Cosmo was full of sympathy over the ruins of "Lucile's", and did everything he could to help me; and I had hosts of friends. But I wanted something more. I could never walk through the big stores and see yards of materials, silks, chiffons and velvets without a feeling of homesickness for the studio. I was like an artist shut away from his colours, or a violinist deprived of his violin.

I was almost envious of my sister, Elinor Glyn, who was making cinema history in Hollywood. She was perfectly happy finding self-expression in the work she loved. Her letters to me were full of enthusiasm. In one of them she told me of Hollywood's newest discovery, Clara Bow.

"Everyone out here is tremendously excited over what they call my invention of 'It,'" she wrote, "which is really rather absurd because I have been writing of

the qualities one associates with 'It' since 1903, only no one thought of giving a definite name to them until my novel came out and caused such a sensation. Now all Hollywood is talking of 'It', and just what constitutes 'It', and who has, or has not, got 'It', until I am quite tired of hearing them all. What annoys me most of all is that they will insist on confusing 'It' with sex-appeal, which is both vulgar and stupid, for in that case every pretty woman would have 'It'! However, I have done my best to explain.

"The result of all this excitement has been that Paramount's have asked me to write a scenario around the theme of 'It' for a new discovery of theirs, a dear little girl called Clara Bow. She has the most beautiful eyes I have ever seen, and a mop of curly, red hair. I had her to see me this morning and found her very intelligent, and so eager and willing to learn. I have the feeling that she would make a wonderful tragic actress if only one could provide her with a really good governess to correct her accent, which is appalling."

Later I had another letter. The new film was progressing splendidly, although both my sister and Clara Bow had been nearly drowned while they were making it. They and other members of the company had been out for eleven days in a decrepit old yacht on the Pacific so that some of the scenes should be filmed under the right conditions.

"We had a frightful time, for the weather was very rough during part of the trip," Elinor wrote. "It was a severe test for anyone's character, but Clara Bow was charming all through it. She never once lost her temper or gave way to moods, as nearly every star in Hollywood would have done in the same circumstances. She was so cheerful and considerate that it was a pleasure to be with her."

Her letters revived memories of New York and the

film stars whom I had dressed, Mary Pickford, Lillian and Dorothy Gish, Pauline Frederick . . . I could picture them all. I longed to be back in the studio again.

It was this longing to do something that made me take a flat in Chelsea, where I started to make a few models. I had no mannequins and no showroom, only one or two girls to sew for me. The fitting was done in my drawing-room, which was terribly inconvenient. It was once the cause of a *contretemps*.

Betty Blythe, the famous film star, had come to me for a number of dresses for her new picture. Now the most important point in making dresses for the screen is that they must be so tight that there is not even an extra inch of material to cause unnecessary wrinkles, otherwise the fit of a beautiful dress can be ruined when it is seen through the camera. Hollywood has, therefore, formed the invariable habit of being fitted with nothing on underneath the dress.

On this particular afternoon Betty Blythe arrived to try on her new evening dress, and I left her in the drawing-room while I went to summon the fitter.

Meanwhile a very august lady had arrived to see some designs I had prepared for her and was shown by my parlourmaid, who was young and inexperienced and somewhat flustered by the rank of the visitor, into the drawing-room. When I reached the door, I was just in time to see her make a hurried exit. With some agitation she told me that the occupant of the room had been a young lady whose only clothing consisted of a pair of stockings !

Of course I explained what had happened, and to my great relief the august lady took the situation with the most gracious good humour, and commented on the beauty of Betty Blythe's figure.

After that I gave orders that film stars were to be fitted in my bedroom in future !

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

WHEN I was young I always turned to the last pages of a book before deciding whether I wanted to read it or not, for I held the view that no story which had not a satisfactory ending could possibly be worth bothering about.

I should not like anyone to apply this test to the story of my life as I have lived it and as I have tried to set it down here, for the climax is neither a very romantic nor a very thrilling one. I have had more, perhaps, than my fair share of romance and adventure, but I have crowded both into the earlier years of my life. I am content now to be a spectator. Yet there is something eternally adventurous in us all and I can still look forward to the unknown, the blank page at the end of the book, which has yet to be filled in.

I did not build up a second house of "Lucile", although I was often tempted to do so, and perhaps one day I shall turn the key in my studio and come back to the world as a new-old designer. If I do so the first thing I shall remember is the adage, *Plus ça change, plus ça reste le même chose*. I who have dressed three generations of women am continually surprised to find looking back at it all how little fashions have changed in the main essentials. Many of the dresses I made thirty or forty years ago could be worn to-day, with only the most trivial alterations. The materials are called by other names, but they are very much the same materials, the line has changed, but it is only a superficial change. The fashions of the 'nineties

would actually look less absurd to us to-day than the fashions of seven years ago would, with their exaggeratedly short skirts and their waistline midway between hip-bones and knee.

And as the fashions have changed but little, so have their wearers. The ideal of "the modern woman" created a few years ago by the designers of the Rue de la Paix, the exponent of the cocktail bar, the ultra-sophisticated slang, and the inevitable cigarette is gradually giving place to a mock-Victorian era. The natural lilies-and-roses complexion may be artfully simulated by Elizabeth Arden's preparations, the limpid innocence of eyes gazing up from an aureole of curls may be a matter of careful shading, but the general effect is much the same. One must not look too closely that is all, but then the Victorians themselves never looked too closely ; they were adepts at shutting their eyes.

If I do return one day to my studio I shall have no difficulty in creating the dresses of 1932, for they are only an evolution of the dresses I designed at the beginning of this century. After all, an artist of a hundred years ago, could he find himself transplanted to modern life, would have no difficulty in portraying the beauties of to-day, for beauty is less a matter of fashion than one supposes.

For the present I have interests enough, for I have been more fortunate than many people and the years have left me most of my friends. I am not lonely in my little house on Hampstead Heath, and I have my daughter and my grandchildren, so that I can build my life around them. When I was younger my recipe for happiness was to think only a little and to live a great deal, now I am learning to reverse this order of things, which after all is only natural. The past is so full of memories that I cannot grudge others the present. As Lawrence Hope wrote :

"So shall she see the flame in others' eyes,
Hear the quick questions and the low replies ;
But this shall not disturb her inward rest
Because in her time she also knew the best.

"But those who let the days of youth pass by,
Scorning to share a lover's ecstasy,
They shall repent when all their youth is flown,
Most bitterly, because they have not known."

I could not ever complain that I "have not known" for I have at least lived my life to its fullest extent, with many mistakes and with much payment for them, but in one thing I believe I have been successful ; I am still in love with life. I still think this world a glorious place in spite of its drawbacks, and I am glad to have had the privilege of living. Years ago I used to dread the thought of growing old ; now as I approach it I realize that old age is like the bogey tales which frightened us when we were children. It does not exist. The wrinkles and the grey hairs are only on the surface, and only affect the superficial. All of the things which are really ours, a part of ourselves, we keep for ever.

Sometimes when I sit alone at night I turn back the curtain and look into the past again, and remember some of the companions who walked a little way along the road with me . . . Ellen Terry and her calm, serene philosophy. Her art so filled her thoughts that she had no time for growing old; what would she have said to me ? I know, for she said it so often in her lifetime . . .

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may."

Dear Ellen Terry, I am grateful for my memories of her.

And then I think of Sarah Bernhardt, dying in her poverty while bailiffs' men waited at her doors, and

an enterprising cinema company took a film of her last hours so that the son, for whom she had slaved, might be made the richer by a few paltry thousands of francs. I can only remember her in the last play in which I saw her, *La Gloire* of Maurice Rostand ; she could have had no epitaph more fitting.

And then I pass to Victorien Sardou, historian and philosopher.

“History only serves to show us how little is our importance in the scheme of the world,” he once said to me. “It is only the privileged few who leave any imprint upon time.”

But the knowledge of this did not prevent him from enjoying life to the full.

There was Isadora Duncan, so absorbed in her gospel of pagan pleasure, pursuing beauty so ardently, that she scarcely saw the pitfall at the end of the road where old age waited for her ; which was wise enough for she never lived to fall into it.

And Lily Langtry, who slipped away from the scenes of her triumphs and passed the last years of her life at Monte Carlo, what a grief old age was to her.

“There is enough punishment for every sin we have ever committed in our lives in the penalty of growing old,” I remember her telling me long ago, yet when old age actually came to her I do not think she was altogether unhappy.

And then I think of Billy Sunday and his sturdy Christianity.

“Catch hold of the lifeline,” he would have said to me.

Well, perhaps he was right too.

And last of all I think of Cosmo, my husband. I realize that I have written very little of this quiet, rather stern Scotsman whom I married. It is not because I have not thought of him many times since I began this book ; his death last year left a blank in

my life that will never be filled ; but both he and I belonged to the generation which made a virtue of reticence, at least where one's personal affairs were concerned, and he would have disliked nothing more than the idea that I should lay bare all the intimacies of our life together.

I know that it is the fashion to-day to turn your soul and every emotion it experiences inside out for the benefit of all and sundry, but I cannot accustom myself to it. So of Cosmo I will only write that I loved him very dearly, and although we disagreed as all lovers do sometimes, he never once failed me in all the years of our marriage. His was that rare gift of understanding which pardons everything.

In these days everyone accepts the fact that a married woman can work without running the risk of wrecking her home life, but at the time when I first went into the business world it was different. I was solemnly warned by well-meaning friends that I should almost certainly lose my husband unless I gave up my work and devoted my whole time to him. A woman's place was the home, they told me, and for her to step out of it even for a few hours each day to compete with men in their own field meant the forfeiture of privileges which have been hers from time immemorial. What privileges, I would ask them ? And they would become rather vague and murmur something about protection, and the right of a man to support his wife, and the right of a wife to devote her whole time to her husband. All of which is perfectly true in theory, but like many other theories not infallible in practice.

My own view of the question is this. There is nothing that is more likely to wreck marriage than boredom, for the moment that either husband or wife begins to see their partnership as a disagreeable tie restraining them from living the sort of life that interests them, its failure is assured. They may remain together,

but it will be out of a sense of duty rather than out of mutual companionship, and duty can be a terribly dull thing to live with. In nearly all the unhappy marriages that I know of I have found that the wife has been bored, and has not had enough in her life to interest her. In the old days it was different, for then being a wife was a whole-time job, and between running a big household, having children and bringing them up, and entertaining in the lavish way that was then a social necessity there was no opportunity for the most energetic woman on earth to be bored.

But these are the days of small households, small families and labour-saving flats, and by the time that a woman has sent her children to school, arranged the flowers and given the tradesmen the orders for the day she realizes that the rest of the twenty-four hours has to be filled somehow, and very often it is difficult to fill it. For the woman who is what is called "a born housewife" the problem is simpler, for one can always find something to do in a house, just as a man can always find something to do to a car, but very few modern women are "born housewives". For these women a career is their salvation. It certainly was mine, for I am ashamed to admit that I never had much interest in the actual running of my house, and found that the competent housekeeper I was able to afford did the work far more efficiently and far more happily than I should have done, leaving me free to devote myself to the thing I was a success at, my designing. The result was that I never knew what it was to be bored.

I am not advocating for one moment that the woman who feels an urge towards the business world should neglect her home, and give her husband and children the second place in her interests, but I do think that there are many women to-day sitting discontented and repining in small suburban homes, kept

there by the conventional idea that they are in their only rightful place, when there would be a far greater chance of happiness for both themselves and their husbands if they were able to take up a career which would give them a wider outlook on life.

For myself I never regretted my efforts to reconcile marriage with a business career, for I only found that my husband and I gained a better understanding of one another through a mutual interest. I was one of the pioneers among women of my class to enter the business world, and I often envy the modern business girl her chance to begin where I left off. She has so many more possibilities at her command than I ever had, and so many doors are open to her which were closed to me.

One of the few welcome changes which the War brought about was the levelling of the social barriers which were the cause of so many wasted talents in the past. In these days women can take up any career that interests them ; they can become book-keepers or shop assistants, chorus girls or horse dealers without losing their place in society. What a far cry it seems from the day when my dressmaking venture horrified the orthodox !

As a dress designer and as a woman in what is called, I suppose, society I have seen many things.

I saw the passing of the Victorians. The Court mourning I made for Queen Victoria's death was a farewell note to the old regime. It said farewell to so many things, to wax fruit and antimacassars, to family prayers, and to the ideal of "the good woman" who never tempted her husband to carnal thoughts and was ashamed of passion, if she was so misguided as to ever feel it.

The coronation dresses for the Edwardian beauties heralded a more lavish, less restricted era. People relaxed, started to go abroad to Biarritz and Baden-

Baden, women began to spend more, and to think more of their clothes.

Then came the Georgians and the feminists ; the Suffragettes were screaming for freedom in Trafalgar Square while I launched in Paris the silliest, most helpless, most irresponsible fashion that women have ever submitted to . . . the hobble skirt. Society tottered through the last of the pre-War parties, waved tiny lace handkerchiefs, and carried elaborate parasols until the War came with its sweeping changes.

But even the War could not make women forget the fashions, at least not altogether. Side by side with the pictures of the British Expeditionary Force embarking appeared the pictures of the new dresses, with their wide taffeta skirts, tight bodices and full sleeves. Women, always personal in their outlook on everything, had translated the world's crisis in their own way. Their men were going to fight for them, they wanted themselves to represent everything that was most feminine. So they put on frills and laces and big hats with ribbon bows to gladden the hearts of the returned warriors. It was an unconscious form of logic perhaps, but a perfectly true one.

Later, as the struggle became far graver than anyone had imagined, the fashions changed again. The women were standing shoulder to shoulder with the men, and as one after another was absorbed into some sort of War-work the clothes became practical. Tailor-made suits replaced the bouffant skirts, hats became plain ; fashions became almost like the uniforms the men were wearing.

The War ended and once more the fashions reflected the reaction. This time there was no apparent logic in the change. The only definite idea seemed in favour of discarding the old institutions. Women took off their corsets, reduced their clothing to the minimum tolerated by the conventions and wore

clothes which wrapped around them rather than fitted. Dresses slipped on and off without fastenings, unrestrained hips wobbled in the freedom of the new barbaric jazz movements ; some people were shocked ; others, grown wise, shrugged their shoulders over a passing phase.

The revolt came in the austerity of the new "boyish ideal", established by the dressmakers ; slender figures were dressed with the simplicity of the Greek tunics.

And now, as I have already written, we are back to a mock Victorian, but it is a new and sophisticated Victorian, for between the 'nineties and to-day women have run through a whole gamut of emotions, and a whole cycle of fashions. So the dress of 1932 expresses a little of all the fleeting modes that have led up to it.

So much for my observations as a dressmaker.

As a woman I have seen the end of entertaining as the Edwardians knew it. We have to-day no hostesses to take the place of Mrs. Willie James and the Countess of Warwick ; we have no political receptions worthy of the past traditions. The old splendour of hospitality has gone, there is neither time nor money for it to-day. And with it have gone many other things ; the art of conversation, for instance, which flourished in the drawing-rooms of thirty or forty years ago has no place at the cocktail party ; even the informal little dinner parties, which are so popular at present, are generally a hurried prelude to a theatre, and there is no time for much talk in between the courses of a curtailed menu.

I meet few really witty women to-day, and those I do meet are nearly all of my own generation, for the modern girl excels in many things, but even her most ardent admirers could not claim for her the art of conversation, and my own experience has shown me that the modern young man is even more deficient in this respect.

There are also few outstanding beauties to-day, although I am quite prepared to admit that this is probably due to the fact that the general standard is so much higher that, in a world where so many women are more than ordinarily pretty, great beauty does not excite the comment it did in the past. Or perhaps it is merely that modern beauty is not surrounded with the same glamour. We have no successor to Lily Langtry, yet there are many women in society who taken feature by feature are quite as beautiful as she was, but then Lily Langtry was a legend, she stood for romance.

I am no slavish admirer of the past; I do not hark back to Victorian and Edwardian days as to a halcyon age, where everything was better than it will ever be again, as so many of my contemporaries do. On the contrary, I think that the present generation has got rid of a great deal of humbug and hypocrisy; people have learnt to look facts in the face. But I do regret the passing of so much of the romance which made the world a very pleasant place in the past. It is possible to look upon realities too much, so that you lose the power of make-believe, and I think that perhaps is a mistake which we are all making to-day.

But, after all, it is easy to grow wise when one is only a spectator, *sur la branche*, and that is my rôle now, as I sit in my little house in Hampstead and review the past and the present as I have known it and know it still.

But I do not intend always to remain a spectator; my enthusiasms and interests are still keen, new adventures stretch ahead of me, and I await eagerly the future.

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